

Assess the Level of Knowledge and Distribution of Menopausal Symptoms among Postmenopausal Women Attending Gynecology OPD in Jipmer, Puducherry

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Abstract: **Background:** Menopause is a biological stage in a woman's life which shows her closure to the end of reproductive age or fertility period. **Aim:** This study is aimed to assess knowledge and distribution of Menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women. **Methods:** It was a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive study, conducted among 145 postmenopausal women attended Gynecology OPD in JIPMER. The data was collected by using the structured interview schedule, validated knowledge questionnaire and standardized Menopause rating scale (MRS Tool). **Result:** The result showed that among all the postmenopausal symptoms, the most frequently reported symptoms were joint and muscular discomfort (82.1%), sleep problems (79.3%), depression (73.1%) and physical and mental exhaustion (62.8%). Majority (48.3%) of them had moderate level of symptoms. Majority (84.8%) had an inadequate level of knowledge. **Conclusion:** The findings of the study concluded that the level of knowledge regarding menopause was inadequate and most of them were having moderate level of menopausal symptoms. Thus there is need to increase knowledge of elderly women regarding menopause and its symptoms through proper health education and counseling and the health care providers should pay more attention towards postmenopausal women's health so that the health of the elderly women can be improved.

Keywords: Postmenopausal women, knowledge, distribution, menopausal symptoms, menopause rating scale

1. Introduction

In recent days, the level of women's health care depends upon women's status and position in society. As they become old, susceptibility to diseases increases among this older population comprised of men and women both. Mostly women and men have similar issues, but women also have some other specified health problems related to menstrual cycle, menopause, maternal health, contraception, labor process and cancer of the breast these problems needs care as early as possible, quick identification, special care, and consideration. [1, 2]

In women's life, menopause is considered as a vital phase rather than a disease. It occurs naturally in all women's life. Once it starts, it is termed as Menarche and this is the signal of an active reproductive function while menopause shows the end of the reproductive function. The word 'menopause' suggests the 'end of menstrual cycles.' The term menopause has been taken from the two Greek words; those are 'men' and the 'pauses'. Where the word 'men' indicates months and word 'pauses' indicates cessation. Thus menopause is defined as the permanent cessation of menstruation indicates losing of

reproductive function which is resulting from the loss of activities of the follicles of the ovaries when the reproductive age at its end. [3, 4, 5]

According to WHO, natural menopause age for women globally range between the ages 45 and 55 years and it differs according to ethnic group. Whereas in India, women's mean age at menopause ranges from 40.32 to 48.84 years. Thus this shows that Indian women attain menopause at a very early age. [6]

Menopause-related symptoms have been broadly studied in developed countries, but in developing countries, very few data are present. In our present scenario, women are more cautious about their reproductive health rather than menopausal health and in reproductive age, they are getting more attention, care, and health-related concern as compared to post-menopausal women. Even they are devoid of the proper health facility. In the current setting, mostly elder women come to the Gynecology OPD with complaints of menopausal symptoms. They used to ask so many questions regarding these symptoms. Thus, this motivated the researcher to conduct this study in the current setting and to collect more

information regarding common symptoms during their menopause.

2. Literature Review

Mahajan N et al. (2012) conducted a cross-sectional research study to examine the health-related problems among menopausal women. They selected 100 menopausal women from the general community setting of Himachal Pradesh in Shimla who did not get menstruation for 12 months. The results revealed that the mean age of menopause was 44.54 years. Mostly 62% of the participants showed fatigue symptom, 56% of participants showed hot flushes, 52% of them with cold sweats and 51% were having backache. Along with these symptoms, arthritis had seen among 25% of the participants, hypertension among 23% of them, and diabetes among 6% of the study participants.^[7]

Cinthura C et al (2017) conducted a study to assess knowledge about symptoms of menopause among women and make them aware about the same. The women age ranged between 40 to 55 Years. It was manually handed over to some participants and was also conducted online. Knowledge on menopause based close-ended questionnaire was distributed to each participant to collect data. The study result revealed that 54% of the participants had proper knowledge of the cause of menopause while 59% of participants had wrong knowledge about it. The study also concluded that rural women (40%) had less knowledge as compared to urban women.^[8]

Problem statement

Assess the level of knowledge and distribution of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women attending Gynecology OPD in JIPMER, Puducherry

Objectives

- To determine the proportion of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.
- To assess the level of knowledge regarding menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.

3. Materials and methods

The research design used for the present study was a cross-sectional descriptive design. The sample of the present study was postmenopausal women who were attending Gynecology OPD in JIPMER during the period of data collection. A total of 145 postmenopausal women were selected whose age ranged between 40- 60 years and who had history of normal menopause with complete 12 months cessation. Surgical and premature menopause were exclusion criteria for the selection of participants. Non- probability Purposive sampling technique was used.

II. Severity of each menopausal symptoms

Level of symptoms	No symptoms	Mild symptoms	Moderate symptoms	Severe symptoms	Very severe symptoms
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Approximately 250 women come to JIPMER hospital with the Gynecological problems daily such as adenomyosis, heavy menstrual bleeding, uterine fibroid, uterine prolapse, dysmenorrhea, and excessive white discharge etc. out of those women, approximately 20-30 women come to the hospital with complaint of menopausal problems and its complications.

In this study, Knowledge and distribution of Menopausal symptoms were assessed using structured interview schedule and standardized Menopause rating scale (MRS Tool) respectively.

4. Results

In socio- demographic variables, among 145 postmenopausal women, majority 54(37.2%) of them were in the age group of 46- 51 years. The mean age of the participant was 50.98 years. In case of educational status, most of them 70(48.3%) completed primary education. With regard to living status, majority 122(84.1%) of them were married. Majority 107(73.8%) were the housewife while only 38(26.2%) were employed. In clinical variables, majority 66(45.5%) of them attained menarche at more than 14 years. 52(35.9%) of them attained menopause within the age group of 45- 49 years. The mean age at menopause was 46.98 years. 106(73.1%) of them had last menstrual period within 2-5 years.

a) Distribution of menopausal symptom

I. Experienced menopausal symptoms by the study of participants.

Menopausal symptoms	Experiencing symptoms			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Hot Flush	86	59.2	59	40.7
Heart Discomfort	38	26.2	107	73.8
Sleep Problems	115	79.3	30	20.7
Depressive Mood	106	73.1	39	26.9
Irritability	83	57.2	62	42.8
Anxiety	49	33.8	96	66.2
Physical Mental Exhaustion	91	62.8	54	37.2
Sexual Problems	5	3.4	140	96.6
Bladder Problems	79	54.5	66	45.5
Dryness Of Vagina	21	14.5	124	85.5
Joint & Muscular Discomfort	119	82.1	26	17.9

The above table 1 depicts that among 145 postmenopausal women, the majority of postmenopausal women 119(82.1%) had joint and muscular discomfort, 115(79.3%) of them complained about sleep problems, 106(73.1%) of them had depression and 91(62.8%) of them had physical and mental exhaustion.

	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hot Flush	59	40.7	1	0.7	16	11	64	44.1	5	3.4
Heart Discomfort	107	73.8	4	2.8	28	19.3	6	4.1	0	0
Sleep Problems	30	2.7	2	1.4	41	28.3	69	47.6	3	2.1
Depressive Mood	39	26.9	7	4.8	63	43.4	35	24.1	1	0.7
Irritability	62	42.8	6	4.1	37	25.5	39	26.9	1	0.7
Anxiety	96	66.2	5	3.4	35	24.1	9	6.2	0	0
Physical Mental Exhaustion	54	37.2	6	4.1	62	42.8	22	15.2	1	0.7
Sexual Problems	140	96.6	1	0.7	3	2.1	1	0.7	0	0
Bladder Problems	66	45.5	6	4.1	23	15.9	43	29.7	7	4.8
Dryness Of Vagina	124	85.5	3	2.1	12	8.3	5	3.4	1	0.7
Joint & Muscular Discomfort	26	17.9	0	0	10	6.9	72	49.7	37	25.5

III. Overall severity of menopausal symptoms:

Table 3

Level of menopausal symptoms	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
No Symptoms (0)	0	0
Mild Symptoms (1-11)	31	21.4
Moderate Symptoms (12-22)	70	48.3
Severe Symptoms (23-33)	44	30.3
Very Severe Symptoms (34-44)	0	0
Total	145	100

The above table 3 shows that majority 70 (48.3%) of them had moderate level of symptoms, 44 (30.3%) had severe level of symptoms and 31 (21.4%) postmenopausal women had mild level of symptoms and none of the postmenopausal women 0 (0%) had very severe level of symptoms.

b) Level of Knowledge

I. Knowledge regarding each menopausal symptom

Table 4. (N=145)

Menopausal symptoms	Have knowledge			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Hot Flush	39	26.9	106	73.1
Heart Discomfort	15	10.3	130	89.7
Sleep Problems	67	46.2	78	53.8
Depressive Mood	42	29	103	71
Irritability	29	20	116	80
Anxiety	22	15.2	123	84.8
Physical & Mental Exhaustion	42	29	103	71
Sexual Problems	9	6.2	136	93.8
Bladder Problems	15	10.3	130	89.7
Dryness Of Vagina	8	5.5	137	94.5
Joint & Muscular Discomfort	62	42.8	83	57.2

The above table 4 shows that among 145 postmenopausal women, majority of them 67(46.2%) had knowledge about sleep problem, 62(42.8%) had knowledge about joint and muscular discomfort, 42(29%) had knowledge about depression and physical- mental exhaustion, 39(26.9%) had knowledge about hot flush.

II. Overall level of knowledge

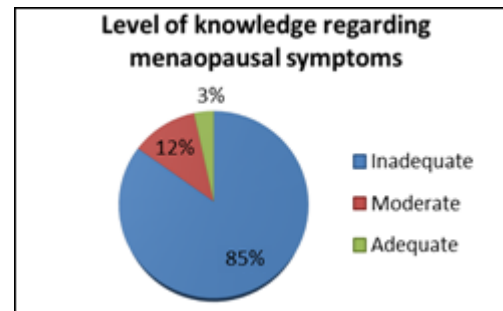


Figure 1: Depicts that the majority of them 123(84.8%) had an inadequate level of knowledge.

5. Discussion

It was seen from the study result that majority of postmenopausal women 119(82.1%) had joint and muscular discomfort, 115(79.3%) of them complained about sleep problems, 106(73.1%) of them had depression and 91(62.8%) of them had physical and mental exhaustion. While 86(59.2%) of postmenopausal women complained of hot flush, 83(57.2%) of them complained of irritable mood and 79(54.5%) of them had bladder problem. Along with these symptoms, 49(33.8%) of postmenopausal women were anxious, 38(26.2%) of them had heart discomfort. Very less postmenopausal women complained about the dryness of vagina and sexual problems those were 21(14.5%) and 5(3.4) respectively.

In this study majority of them had only primary level education. So researcher concluded that women with less education were having more symptoms. Majority (48.3%) of them had moderate level of symptoms. Garg R et al. (2015) conducted a similar study to determine menopausal symptoms in postmenopausal women. This study was conducted in North India among 218 postmenopausal women, Agra. This study result concluded that Majority of the women (70%) had joint and muscle pain, 65% women showed symptoms of mood swings, 46.7 % of them complained about low back pain and hot flushes and excessive sweating were found among 45 % of the study participants.^[6]

Whereas about knowledge on menopausal symptoms were found inadequate among majority of postmenopausal women (84.8%).

6. Conclusion

The present study findings concluded that level of knowledge was inadequate (among 84.8%) and mostly all the women had one or more number of menopausal symptoms. Thus, the researcher suggests that there is a need to provide health education and counseling regarding menopausal symptoms so that they can take prompt treatment for their discomfort and can live better life with some lifestyle modifications like exercise, yoga, good diet pattern etc. This study will serve as the basis for the health professionals and other students to do further studies and also for setting up counseling and health education sessions for elderly women.

7. Future Scope

As participants had inadequate knowledge on menopause and menopausal symptoms so women can be made aware of the same as well as benefits of lifestyle modification to reduce their discomfort. Further study can be performed on larger samples for the generalization of the findings.

8. Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Harichandrakumar KT, Professor and Mrs. Anusuya R, Senior Biostatistician, Department of Biostatistics, JIPMER, Puducherry for helping me in the statistical analysis and guidance throughout the research study. We are also thankful to all the postmenopausal women who had participated in this study and made my study successful.

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