



AN EXPLORATORY STUDY TO ASSESS THE SEVERITY OF MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS AND THE LIFE SATISFACTION LEVELS AMONG MENOPAUSAL WOMEN

Healthcare

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KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Menopause is considered to be the end of reproductive period. Modern medicine has contributed in prolonging the life span of people. Every woman between the age of 45-50 experiences the transition from reproductive to non-reproductive period as a normal physiological process. After the age of 45 years amenorrhea for 12 consecutive months without any physiological or pathological cause is considered to be menopause. A year before attaining menopause the women goes through various ovulatory changes like cessation of menses which is known as premenopausal transition. The term post menopausal transition and the term post menopause is defined as dating from last menstrual period whether it is natural or induced. The age and pattern of menopause highly varies world wide. According to the WHO, natural menopause takes place between the age of 45 and 55 years for the women worldwide. It is generally accepted that the average age at menopause is about 51 years in industrialized countries, but in developing countries, it ranges from 43 to 49 years. The nature, severity, and frequency of symptoms vary not only among the individuals of different countries but also in the same population with different cultures and ethnicities. The concept of local biology, reproductive characteristics, and sociocultural aspects in relation to menopausal symptoms has been discussed in various studies. Menopause becomes important for clinicians and health policy-makers as with general increase in life expectancy; women are likely to live for more than 20 years after menopause in estrogen-deprived state with impaired quality of life due to menopausal symptoms. The quality of life of the increasing aging female population is now becoming an important issue. However, there are very little data on the menopausal problems to deal effectively with them. Hence, this study was undertaken with an attempt to evaluate the menopausal symptoms/problems of women aged 40-60 years to understand the prevalence and pattern; so as to plan interventions for remedial measures and also to create awareness among women for improving their health status and quality of life.

OBJECTIVES:

To assess the severity of menopausal symptoms and various degrees of individual menopausal symptoms; assess the life-satisfaction levels of menopausal women; find out the association between severity of menopausal symptoms & selected socio-demographic variables; find out the association between life satisfaction in menopausal women and selected socio-demographic variables; find out the correlation between severity of menopausal symptoms and life satisfaction in menopausal women.

METHODOLOGY:

The study had an exploratory cross-sectional design. The population comprised of menopausal women within the age limit of 40-55 years who visited the O.P.D of Arianth hospital and research center as patient or patients attendants and who agreed to respond to the interview. A sample size of 150 menopausal women was selected using convenience sampling. The investigator used a Rating Scale consisting of 12 items to assess the severity of menopausal symptoms and a Rating Scale consisting of 8 items to assess the life satisfaction levels of menopausal women. Reliability was calculated using split half method and the 'r' value was 0.88 of the modified Menopause Rating Scale and 0.97 of the Modified Life Satisfaction Scale, which shows that the tool was reliable. The data was analyzed by using various descriptive and inferential tests i.e. (χ^2) test and also the Karl-Pearson's correlation coefficient formula.

FINDINGS:

The study shows that there is no significant relationship between type

of family, marital status, average monthly income, total time spend in doing household activities, work status and area of residence.

A significant association was found between severity of menopausal symptoms and many socio-demographic variables such as age ($2 = 13.32, P < 0.05$), educational status ($2 = 17.05, P < 0.05$), religion ($2 = 15.73, P < 0.05$), seasons where maximum menopausal discomforts were felt ($2 = 21.7, P < 0.01$), and the managing of household activities ($2 = 63.2, P < 0.001$). Thus it can be inferred that as the age increased, the severity of menopausal symptoms also increased. It was found that lower the educational status, greater was the severity of menopausal symptoms. The menopausal women experienced maximum discomfort during the winter season. It was also found that women's managing household activities by themselves experienced maximum discomfort than those who were taking assistance for household activities. There was a significant association between the life satisfaction levels of menopausal women and the average monthly income of the family ($2 = 22.13, P < 0.05$), and also their work status ($2 = 67.16, P < 0.001$).

In this study, 42% had severe menopausal symptoms, 30% had moderate menopausal symptoms and 19% had very severe menopausal symptoms and 9% had mild menopausal symptoms.

The findings showed that as the severity of menopausal symptoms increased, their life satisfaction levels decreased. Out of 150 menopausal women, 71 (47%) were dissatisfied, 35 (23%) claimed to have a neutral attitude towards their transition stage, 31 (21%) were satisfied, 10 (7%) were very satisfied with their menopausal life and 3 (2%) were very dissatisfied with their menopausal life.

The study showed that as the severity of menopausal symptoms increased, their life satisfaction levels decreased since there was a negative correlation between them.

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded that the major menopausal symptoms experienced by the population under study are hot flushes, joint pain, psychological problems and sexual dysfunctions. The interventions provided for menopausal women should primarily focus on these symptoms first. Reduction in the menopausal symptoms with the help of appropriate intervention would turn increase the quality of life in these women.

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