



## STUDY TO ASSESS KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE REGARDING MENOPAUSE AMONG MENOPAUSAL WOMEN ATTENDING OUTDOOR IN TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL

### Medicine

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** With the increase in life expectancy, in India the population of menopausal women are increasing but there is no current health policy regarding menopausal health. Menopause is associated with multiple physical and psychological symptoms. Menopausal health demands priority in Indian scenario as most are either unaware or do not pay adequate attention to menopausal symptoms. Therefore, menopause now is a concerning matter to maintain and improve women's health. **Aims And Objectives:** The study is designed to assess knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) regarding menopause among menopausal women. **Study Design:** A cross-sectional, hospital-based survey was conducted in women attending Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, Lalla ded hospital, Government Medical College Srinagar. **Materials And Methods:** A total of 300 subjects were enrolled and subjected for interview using prevalidated KAP(knowledge, attitude and practice) questionnaire consisting of 19 items, developed on the basis of the objective of the study. **Results:** A total of 300 women responded to questionnaire, in these most were between 45 and 55 years of age. The mean age of women was  $53.17 \pm 6.61$  and majority (142; 47.33%) were belonging to rural area and were illiterate (140; 46.66%). In the present study majority of the menopausal women had poor score of KAP(knowledge, attitude and practice) regarding menopause. 26.33% of menopausal women had knowledge of menopausal symptoms. 16%, 27.66% and 9% knew that menopause increases risk of cardiovascular, osteoporosis and breast cancer respectively. 63% of menopausal women perceive menopause as loss of youth. Common symptoms that the study subjects suffered were feeling tired 71%, mood changes 56.66%, hot flashes and sweating 37.66%, muscle and joint pains 41%, dryness of vagina 33%, urinary symptoms 30.34%, sexual problems 27.66%. **Conclusions:** Our study shows that the level of good knowledge about menopause was significantly low among menopausal women, majority of women have a negative outlook towards menopause considering as a loss of youth. This shows that the awareness towards menopause should be increased by IEC (information, education, and counseling), so as to help these women to live their postmenopausal years more healthy and active.

### KEYWORDS

Attitude, Knowledge, Menopause

### INTRODUCTION

With the increase in life expectancy, in India the population of menopausal women are increasing<sup>1</sup> but there is no current health policy regarding menopausal health<sup>2</sup>. Each and every women's experience towards menopause are different and many of them are unaware about the menopausal symptoms and health complications related to menopause<sup>3</sup>. Hormonal changes at the menopause are associated with multiple physical and psychological symptoms. Menopausal health demands priority in Indian scenario and is a concerning matter to maintain and improve women's health. They should be armed with knowledge about menopause and its treatment options keeping in mind quality of life issues. Menopause is not just the cessation of menstruation, it is the 'depletion of ovarian follicles' leading to decrease in ovarian hormones. Menopause happens in the critical period of women's life when there is a lot of social transition and it coincides with the 'Empty nest syndrome', when children leave home and women find themselves alone with increased incidence of psychosomatic symptoms. The study is an attempt to identify the level of knowledge, attitude, practice and occurrences of problems related to menopause so that a more culturally focused, relevant, education plan as a health promotion intervention can be taken up.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

The study is designed to assess knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) regarding menopause among menopausal women.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 1. Study Design

This is a hospital-based cross-sectional study which was conducted in Outpatient Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Lalla Ded Hospital, Government Medical College Srinagar after taking institutional ethical clearance. Informed consent was taken from each participant.

#### Inclusion criteria:

All menopausal women as specified by the definition - individual who

has had amenorrhoea of 12 months or more (identified by medical history) attending outpatient clinic in Lalla Ded Hospital, Srinagar were selected after their informed consent.

#### Exclusion criteria:

Women with significant morbidity, psychiatric disorder and suffering from cancer were excluded. Women with un-natural menopause, e.g., surgical or radiotherapy for cervix cancer. Women on medications such as anxiolytics, anti-depressants, to avoid treatment-related effects. Women not giving consent for the data collection due to own reasons.

#### 4. Data Collection

The sample size was calculated according to a confidence interval of 95%, a marginal error of 5%, and a proportion of knowledge among women of the same age from a previous study. Finally, the calculated sample size was 300. All women who met study criteria were included and interviewed using prevalidated questionnaire. Each correct response had a score of 1 (one) and an incorrect response had a score of 0 (zero).

#### 5. Statistical Analysis

SPSS version 21 was used for statistical analysis.

### RESULTS :

A total of 300 women responded to questionnaire, in these most were between 45 and 55 years of age with mean age of women  $53.17 \pm 6.61$  years. Majority (142, 47.33%) belonging to rural area and following Islam religion (252, 84%). About 106 (35.33%) of study participants belonging to lower middle class and given birth to three to four children (146, 48.66%) with mean of  $2.04 \pm 1.63$  births and 140 (46.66%) were illiterate as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sociodemographic profile of study participants

Characteristics	Category	Frequency n(%)
Age(years)	Mean $\pm$ sd	53.17 $\pm$ 6.61
	45 - 55	161(53.66%)

	56- 65	119(39.66%)
	≥66	20(6.66%)
Residence	Rural	142(47.33%)
	Semi-urban	114(38%)
	Urban	44(14.66%)
Religion	Islam	252(84%)
	Sikhism	29(9.66%)
	Hinduism	19(6.33%)
Parity	Mean±sd	2.04±1.63
	None	14(4.66%)
	1-2	99(33%)
	3-4	146(48.66%)
Educational status	>4	41(13.66%)
	Illiterate	140(46.66%)
	Primary school	102(34%)
	Secondary school	45(15%)
Socioeconomic status	College/university level	13(4.33%)
	Upper class	14(4.66%)
	Upper middle class	31(10.33%)
	Middle class	87(29%)
	Lower middle class	106(35.33%)
	Lower class	62(20.66%)

Table 2: In the present study, 26.33% of menopausal women had knowledge of menopausal symptoms. 16%, 27.66% and 9% knew that menopause increases risk of cardiovascular, osteoporosis and breast cancer respectively. 19% believe that post-menopausal bleeding is abnormal. 24.33% think that indulging in recreational activities and physical exercises are beneficial practices. 17.33 % think menopausal women should consult a physician, only 4% of menopausal women are aware of hormone therapy.

**Table 2: Knowledge regarding menopause**

Questions	Yes	No
Do you have knowledge of menopausal symptoms?	79(26.33%)	221(73.66%)
Do you know menopause increases risk of cardio vascular disease?	48(16%)	252(84%)
Do you know menopause increase risk of osteoporosis?	83(27.66%)	217(72.33%)
Do you know menopause increase risk of breast cancer?	27(9%)	273(91%)
Do you think post-menopausal bleeding is abnormal?	57(19%)	243(81%)
Do you think indulging in recreational activities and physical exercises are beneficial practices?	73(24.33%)	227(75.66%)
Do you think menopausal women should consult a physician?	52(17.33%)	248(82.66%)
Are you aware of hormone therapy?	12(4%)	288(96%)

Table 3: 63% of menopausal women perceive menopause as loss of youth. 54% think menopausal psychological symptoms affect quality of life. 38% think that menopause means end of sexual life. 33.66% think that menopause is associated with maturity and experience. 43.66% think that absence of menstruation in the post-menopausal period is a relief. 31.66% think physical changes of menopause are inevitable and hence acceptable.

**Table 3: Attitude**

Questions	Yes	No
Do you perceive menopause as loss of youth	189(63%)	111(37%)
Do you think menopausal psychological symptoms affect quality of life?	162(54%)	138(46%)
Do you think menopause means end of sexual life?	114(38%)	186(62%)
Do you think menopause is associated with maturity and experience?	101(33.66%)	199(66.33%)
Do you think absence of menstruation in the post-menopausal period is a relief?	131(43.66%)	169(56.33%)
Do you think physical changes of menopause are inevitable and hence acceptable?	95(31.66%)	205(68.33%)

Table 4 : 22.33% had consulted a physician at the onset of menopause, of which 14% had shown compliance with treatment/advice. 9.66% have undergone any physical examination / investigation at the onset of menopause. 17.66% have adopted favourable practices in post-menopausal years. 31.66% discuss menopausal symptoms with others.

**Table 4 : Practices at menopause**

Questions	Yes	No
Did you consult a physician at the onset of menopause?	67(22.33%)	233(77.66%)
Have you shown compliance with treatment / advice?	42(14%)	258(86%)
Have you undergone any physical examination / investigation at the onset of menopause?	29(9.66%)	271(90.33%)
Have you adopted favourable practices in post-menopausal years?	53(17.66%)	247(82.33%)
Did you discuss menopausal symptoms with others?	95(31.66%)	205(68.33%)

Table 5: In the present study 62.33% of the menopausal women had poor score of KAP followed by 27.33% who had average score, 8% had good score and only 2.33% had scored excellent (Table 5). All women who met study criteria are included and interviewed using prevalidated questionnaire consisting of 19 items developed on the basis of the objective of the study. Verbal consent was taken from every participant. Each correct response had a score of 1(one) and an incorrect response had a score of 0 (zero). Total KAP score was summed up for each participant (Table 5)

**Table 5 : Used for KAP scoring of participant**

Poor score	0 to 4	187(62.33%)
Average score	5 to 9	82(27.33%)
Good score	10 to 14	24(8%)
Excellent score	15 to 19	7(2.33%)

Table 6: Common symptoms that the study subjects suffered were feeling tired 71%, mood changes 56.66%, hot flashes and sweating 37.66%, muscle and joint pains 41%, dryness of vagina 33%, urinary symptoms 30.34%, sexual problems 27.66%. Only 4% of the women had heard of hormone replacement therapy and 46% had heard of calcium supplements which could be used in old age.

**Table 6: Menopausal symptoms of the present study**

Present study	Symptoms	Percentage
	Feeling tired	213(71%)
	Mood changes	170(56.66%)
	Hot flushes and sweating	113(37.66%)
	Muscle and joint pains	121(41%)
	Dryness of vagina	99(33%)
	Urinary symptoms	91(30.33%)
	Sexual problems	83(27.66%)

## DISCUSSION

As per the present study 53.66% belonged to the age group of 45 to 55 years with mean age of women 53.17±6.61 years. A study conducted by Nahid Yasmin et al reported that majority of the respondents (63.5%) were of age 45-50 years.<sup>45</sup> Our study shows that the majority were illiterate (140; 46.66%), 34% were educated up to primary school, 15% were educated up to higher secondary school and 4.33% were educated upto college/university level. Similar findings were obtained by Loutfy et al in which 78.90% of respondents were uneducated.<sup>6</sup> Present study shows that the majority (35.33%) of the menopausal women belonged to middle lower socioeconomic class. This is consistent with the previous data obtained in the study of Malik HS<sup>7</sup> where 75.5% belonged to poor socio-economic class.

In the present study 26.33% of the women had knowledge of menopausal symptoms. Similarly, in study by Loutfy et al<sup>6</sup> 38.4% of women had a previous knowledge of menopausal symptoms. Also in a study conducted by Yasmin N et al<sup>4</sup> 27.8% of the respondents had knowledge of menopause related symptoms. In contrast in a study conducted by Nusrat N, Nishat Z et al only 15.8% of women knew about menopausal symptomatology.<sup>8</sup> In the present study 16 % of women knew that menopause increases risk of cardiovascular disease. Similarly, in a study conducted by Thomas SE<sup>9</sup> 25% of respondents recognized cardiovascular disease as an associated risk. In the present

study 27.66% of women were aware that menopause increases risk of osteoporosis. In contrast in a study conducted by Thomas SE<sup>9</sup>, 81% of women recognized osteoporosis as a major health risk associated with menopause. As per present study 9% of women knew that menopause increases risk of Breast Cancer. Similarly, in a study conducted by Thomas SE<sup>9</sup> 20% of women were aware that menopause increases risk of breast cancer.

In the present study 63 % women perceived menopause as loss of youth. Likewise, in a study by Osarenren N et al<sup>10</sup> 83% of the respondents consider menopause as an unpleasant experience and 69% conclude that every woman is depressed about menopause<sup>11</sup>. 38% of women in our study considered menopause as an end of sexual life. On contrary in a study conducted by Elisabeth Stadbery et al 60% women had a regular sex life after menopause<sup>11</sup>. In this study 43.66% of women believe that absence of menstruation in the postmenopausal period is a relief. In contrast in a study by Nusrat N and Nishat Z et al<sup>8</sup> 83.42% of women were happy about cessation of menses and they did not want to have menses again. 31.66% of women in our study think that physical changes of menopause are inevitable and hence acceptable.

In the present study 19% of women considered postmenopausal bleeding as abnormal. In present study 24.33% of women were aware that indulging in recreational activities and physical exercises are beneficial practices. In a study by Loutfy et al<sup>6</sup> 91.1% of women were aware of beneficial practices after menopause. In the present study 17.33% of women thought that menopausal women should consult a physician. Likewise, in a study conducted by Loutfy et al<sup>6</sup> 12.2% of women were aware that menopausal women should consult a doctor. In contrast in a study by Osarenren N et al<sup>10</sup> 91% of the respondents indicated that a woman should see a doctor at menopause. In the present study only 4% of menopausal women were aware of hormone therapy. Similarly, in a study conducted by Loutfy et al<sup>6</sup> only 9.3% of respondents were aware about hormone therapy.

22.33% of women in our study have consulted a physician at the onset of menopause, of which 14% have shown compliance with treatment and advices. This is comparable to other studies. In a study by Loutfy et al<sup>6</sup> only 11.1% of women had consulted a physician. Similarly, in a study by Nusrat N and Nishat Z et al<sup>8</sup>, 31.86% of women had sought a doctor.

9.66% of women have undergone any physical examination or investigation at the onset of menopause. This finding is consistent with the result of the study by Thomas SE<sup>9</sup> in which 17% reported been given a physical examination. As per the present study 17.66% of women have adopted favourable practices in postmenopausal years. Similarly, in a study by Loutfy et al<sup>6</sup> 86% of women were indulged in mild to moderate physical activities during the years preceding menopause. 31.66% of women in our study have discussed menopausal symptoms with others. Similarly, in a study by Loutfy et al<sup>6</sup> 69.8% of women had discussed menopausal symptoms with others. Peeyanarjassri (2006),<sup>12</sup> conducted a survey among 270 women aged 45-65 years who attended the gynecological and menopause clinic, Songklanagarind Hospital. The prevalence of the classical menopausal symptoms—hot flushes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness—in the women aged 45-65 years were 36.8%, 20.8%, and 55.3%, respectively. In the current study, the most common symptoms that the study subjects suffered were feeling tired 71%, mood changes 56.66%, hot flashes and sweating 37.66%, muscle and joint pains 41%, dryness of vagina 33%, urinary symptoms 30.33%, sexual problems 27.66%.

#### Summary:

The study results revealed low level of good knowledge about menopause among them. This finding necessitates the need to include knowledge about menopause in higher educational curriculum, and to do more efforts for creating mass awareness about this issue. Finally, designing and implementing a proper health education program and disseminating it on a large scale through different mass media can have an effective and valuable role in improving women's knowledge about menopause in the country.

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