

The Incidence of Menopausal Symptoms in an Urban Population Attending Matured Women Clinic in a Tertiary Healthcare Centre in Northern India: A Retrospective Study

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Background

Menopause marks the end of the reproductive phase of a woman's life. A range of symptoms are experienced by women at this stage of life. These symptoms are mainly vasomotor, somatic and psychological in nature and disrupt the quality of life of women in that age group. Sufficient data from Indian studies to formulate strategies to alleviate these problems faced by a large proportion of women is still lacking from both rural and urban populations.

Aims & Objectives

1. To determine the incidence of menopausal symptoms in an urban population attending Matured Women Clinic in a tertiary healthcare centre.
2. To study the mean age at onset of menopause for this population and its relation with the socio-demographic profiles of the women.

Material & Methods

The data was collected in specially designed booklets with detailed list of symptoms, over 13 years in a Tertiary healthcare centre in the heart of New Delhi, with OPD patient inflow from urban population of New Delhi and semi-urban population from surrounding states. This data was fed in a customised Visual Basic hospital software, which was converted to Microsoft excel format and analysed using SPSS version 17.

Results

The highest frequency of symptoms experienced were joint pains(35.03%) and vasomotor symptoms(Hot

flushes, 34.77%), followed by genito-urinary problems like burning and increased frequency of micturition (28.53%) and increased white discharge per vaginum (18.99%); and neuro-psychological symptoms such as irritability (25.49%) and Insomnia (12.57%). The mean age at onset of menopause for the urban population was 45 years, with a slight variation for natural menopause at 46 years and surgical cases at a mean of 44 years.

Conclusions

The frequency of symptoms experienced by women residing in urban areas of northern India were lower than the rural counterparts, which could be attributed to higher awareness of lifestyle changes and early treatment of symptoms. However, the symptom clusters experienced are consistent with other Indian studies, with women experiencing more of vasomotor symptoms and musculoskeletal symptoms as compared to sexual life disturbances or neuro-psychological symptoms.

Menopause is an important stage within the continuum of the health in a women's life, has gained a lot of attention since the last century. The age of onset of menopause has remained unchanged whereas the longevity of women is increasing. Thus, a woman spends one-third of her life with oestrogen deficiency which results in a variety of symptoms apart from those that accompany the diseases and changes related to ageing. The presence of post-menopausal symptoms may decrease the health related quality of life in women, because a majority of them still do not take any treatment for these symptoms. Population differences in menopausal symptom clustering will provide clues for targeted treatment of these distressing symptoms and strengthen public health strategies aimed at alleviating these distressing life changes.