

A Study on Age at Menopause, Menopausal Symptoms and Problems among Urban Women from Western Odisha, India

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Abstract- The present observational, cross sectional study was carried out in urban women (n=100) from Jharsuguda with the natural body process menopause to evaluate age at menopause and menopausal symptoms in women above the age of 40 belonging to the middle socioeconomic strata from Jharsuguda Western Odisha as well as to evaluate the correlation of age on these symptoms by interviewing regarding their menopausal complaints in the following 40-45(n=39), 45-50(n=36), 50-55(n=17), >55(n=8) years age groups. Mean age of menopause was 44.82 and median 45 years. Menopausal symptoms were assessed by a 36-items checklist. The study reveal, varying nature of symptoms with age and vasomotor symptoms being more prevalent with lesser psychological complaints in this region. Such regional studies will help to corroborate data so that health care providers can plan strategies for the middle aged women suffering from these menopausal symptoms.

Index Terms- Age at Menopause, Menopausal Symptoms, Women Health

I. INTRODUCTION

Menarche and menopause are the turning point in the life of a woman. "Menopause is a stage of life not a disease". — Such as diet and physical activity, climate and women's roles— as factors in women's experiences with menopause.

Postmenopausal women have to face a lot of problems, both physically and psychologically. They have to cope with these changes and accept their new role in the society and family. Women need health teaching to learn the normal parameters of menopause so they may continue to monitor their own health during this time. The age at which natural menopausal period occurs in between the ages of 40 -55 for women worldwide. In 1990, 25 million women worldwide reached the menopause, this number is expected to double by late 2020. An average growth rate of 2-3.5% in the number of women aged over 50 is projected for the developing regions between 1990&2030. National health authorities should examine the implication of the projected rapid growth in the number of post menopausal women between 1990&2030&should anticipate the provision of relevant health services, education promotion activities to cope with the health needs of women in their post menopausal years. International menopause society, 2004, recent surveys have found that half of all women are not aware that menopause is associated with an increased risk of heart disease.

The average woman is postmenopausal for one third of her life, the incidence of certain conditions (e.g., coronary artery disease, diabetes, breast cancer, cervical cancer, and osteoporosis) increases after menopause. Menopause is an unavoidable change that every women will experience, assuming she reaches middle age and beyond. It is helpful if women are able to learn what to expect and what options are available to assist the transition. Menopause is important phase in a woman's life which produces physical, psychological as well as social changes. As menopausal health demand priority in Indian scenario due to increase in life expectancy and growing population of menopausal women, large efforts are required to educate and make these women aware of menopause symptoms. This will help in early recognition of symptoms, reduction of discomfort and fear and enable to seek appropriate medical care if necessary. Menopause is the most misunderstood biological and psychological changes that happens to a woman," says Delhi-based Dr Sonia Malik, IMS President. Most of the women are not aware about the menopausal problems and it needs intervention. They assumed that discomforts are due to aging process which may not be correctable. Only by taking rest in between the work only is possible and those who know we are not interested in treating it by spending money. Some menopausal women found it difficult to use pills. So, it is important to bring awareness about menopausal symptoms and its management among menopausal women and get appropriate treatment which should be used by everyone in all the level of economical background.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present observation cross sectional study included women from Jharsuguda district, Western Odisha. Over a period of 6 months from September 2014 to February 2015 coming from Brajarajnar town an industrial area of Odisha. Total 100 women were enrolled and were distributed in the following age 40-45 (n=39), 45-50(n=36), 50-55(n=17), >55(n=8). The study was done by interview technique using pre-tested and pre-designed questionnaires. Data were collected on socio-demographic information, reproductive history and the physical and psychological symptoms experiences by the respondents. Below the age of 40 years or women who did not give the consent were not included in the study. The data was collected, complied and analysed using statistical packages.

III. RESULTS

The study population comprised of menopausal women with 39%,36%,17%,and 8% being enrolled in 40-45 years, 45-50 years, 50-55 years and >55 years age groups respectively. Mean age at menopause was 44.82 years and median was 45 years. Women are belonging from Hindu religion. Out of the total women enrolled in the study 97% were married and 3% were divorced/widowed or single where as 92% were literate and 8%

were illiterates. Out of the total study subjects enrolled in the present study 83% were housewife whereas 17% were working women. Above 50% of women having two children. On inquiry about dietary patterns 69% were non-vegetarian and 31% were vegetarian. The mean age at menarche was 13.82, mean age of marriage was 20.31 and menopause was 44.82 and median values were 14, 20, and 45 respectively.

Table1: Demographic Characteristics

Variables	NO	%
Age of woman		
40-45	39	39
45 -50	36	36
50-55	17	17
>55	8	8
Educational status		
Illiterate	08	08
Literate	92	92
Occupation		
Working women	17	17
House wife	83	83
Dietary habit		
Vegetarian	31	31
Non vegetarian	69	69
Marital status		
Married	97	97
Divorce/ Widow/single	3	3

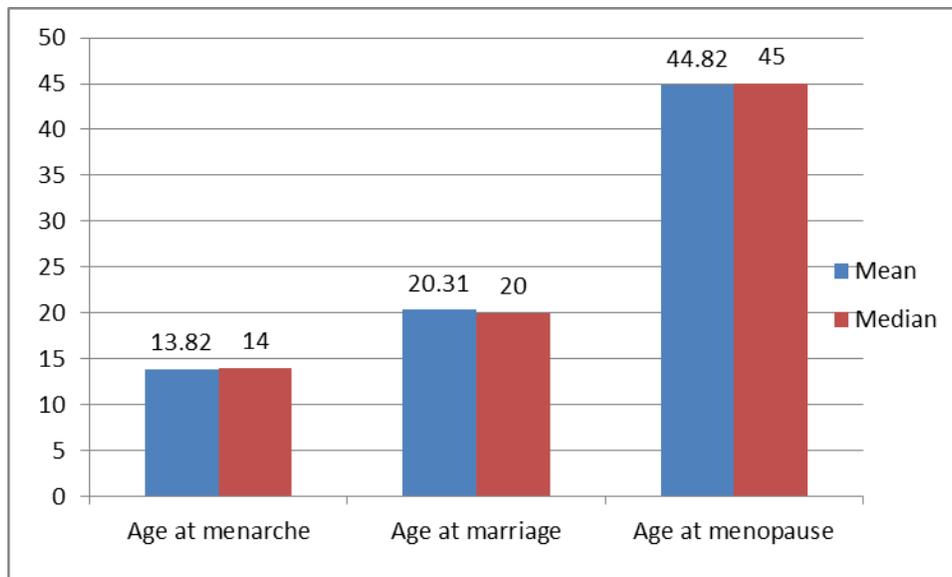


Figure 1: Mean and Median Age at Reproductive phases

Table2: Menopausal Symptoms (Physical Problems)

Physical Problems	F	%
Hot flashes	77	77
Very less bleeding	46	46
Excessive bleeding	17	17
Joint pains	60	60
Sleep disturbance	42	42
Body pains	62	62
Cold hands	26	26
Numbness of fingers	28	28
Tingling of fingers	45	45
Difficulty in passing stool	10	10
Feeling of suffocation	32	32
Loose motions	06	06
Dryness of vagina	34	34
Headaches	43	43
Rapid heart beat	43	43
Cold feet	28	26
Increase in weight	69	69
Difficulty in sexual intercourse	17	17
Interest in sex	07	7

The data on prevalence of physical problems of menopause among the respondents of the study shows that more than 60% of women were suffering with common problems of menopause i.e. hot flashes (77%), joint pain (60%), body pain (62%), and increased weight (69%). More than 40% of women reported sleep disturbance, headache (43%), tingling of finger (45%), and rapid heartbeat (43%). More than (30%) of women reported dryness of vagina (34%), feelings of suffocation (32%), (46%) women were with less bleeding and (17%) were reported excessive bleeding. (26%) and (28%) respondents were suffer from cold hand and cold feet respectively. Very less women were suffer from difficulty in passing stool i.e. (10%), difficulty in sexual intercourse reported (17%) and very less respondents were shows interest in sex i.e. (7%).

Table3: Menopausal Symptoms (Psychological Problems)

Psychological Problems	F	%
Irritability	42	42
Forgetfulness	59	59
Loosing control over emotions	27	27
Poor concentration	17	17
Anxiety	42	42
Feeling that something is crawling on	24	24

skin		
Worry about body image	75	75
Loosing of faminity (femaleness)	06	06
Confusion	46	46
Fear of loosing loved one's	17	17
Disinterest to continue the present job	7	7
More interest to go on working	10	10

The psychological problems of menopause among the respondents of the study reveals that women experienced common psychological changes such as forgetfulness (59%), irritability (42%), anxiety (42%), worry about body image (75%), and confusion (46%).(27%) were loosing control over emotions, (24%) reported feeling that something is crawling on skin, (17%) of respondents had poor concentration. Among the collected data (10%) of the working women were more interested to go on job where as (7%) shows disinterest. The table also shows that only (6%) of respondents had the feeling of loosing faminity(femaleness).

IV. DISCUSSION

In India currently there is no health programs that caters the post reproductive health needs of women. Different programs are initiated for the reproductive age group and at the same time ignoring those who have passed their reproductive stage. The range of menopausal age in Indian women varies from 40.3 to 48.8 years and in developed countries range is from 48 to 51 years . The mean menopausal age in the present study is 44.8 years. This is almost similar to the study done by Singh and

Ahuja (44.6yrs), Shah R et al (44.7 yrs) and Bagga A(44.9 yrs). Different factors like regional and community variation , genetic, environment and nutrition also play an important role in the diversity in attainment of menopause. Most of the respondents considered menopause to be harmful as it has negative impact on their physical and psychological health . Where as it was happily accepted by 20% of women as they getting freedom from menstruation. But the study is contrast with the study done by Kaur that a high proportion (94%) of rural women happily welcome menopause.

Table 4: Mean Age at Menopause

Indian studies	Year	Region	Mean age (year)
Present study	2014	Urban women of western Odisha	44.82
Bansal et al	2010	Women from Punjab rural	45.9
Borker et al	2013	Urban women	48.26
Madhukumar&Gaikwad	2012	Women of Bangalore rural	49.7
Sarker et al	2014	Urban women from Jamnagar	45.3
Sharma et al	2007	Urban women from Jammu	47.53
Singh & Ahuja	1980	Women of Assam	40.32
Sengupta	1993	Kaibarta (Assam)	42.95
Kulkarni & Joshi	1979	Deshastha Bramin Maharashtra	43.46
Kar & Mahanta	1975	Singhpho women	43.65
Balvir	1985	Sikligar women, Punjabi	43.71
Sharma & Sing	1980	Choudary Women Kangra	43.84
Singh & Ahuja	1980	Arora women Punjabi	43.96
Gosh & Kumari	1973	Sindhi women Delhi	44.60
Singh & Ahuja	1980	Punjabi women	44.68
Singh & Arora	2005	Women from rural north India	44.1
Shah R et al	2004	Women from Mumbai	44.7
Bagga A	2004	Hindu Kalita women	44.94
Rakshit S	1962	Maharashtrian Brahmin	45.84
Sengupta & rjkhowa	1969	Ahom women of Dibrugarh in	47.10
Kaw et al	1994	Assam	47.50
Mastana	1996	Assam Women	47.68
Sharma & Sing	1980	Among labanas North West India Brahmin women Himachal	48.84
Studies from outside India			
Kim YH et al	2003	Urban area of Korea	48.29
Malachara JM et al	2002	State of Mexico	48.0
Mckinalay et al	1992	South East Asian women	51
Oldenhav & Netelenbos	1994	Developed countries	51

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The study also reveals varying nature of menopausal symptoms. The number of symptoms were more in transitional period that is in peri menopause followed by post menopause and pre menopause. Common menopausal symptoms of present study compared with other Indian and abroad studies in table-5 . These variation may be due to the reduction of hormone levels with individual differences. The study reveals varying nature of menopausal symptoms. Some of the vasomotor symptoms like hot flashes, vaginal dryness, rapid heartbeat, feeling suffocation

and numbness of fingers found highest in postmenopausal women. Excessive bleeding, headache, joint pain, sleep disturbance and weight gain were significantly higher in perimenopausal women. The psychological symptoms are prevalent with increasing age which was reported by American women and also in Indian women by Baga. Women were aware only about irregularity of menstruation as a symptom of menopause.

Table5: Most Frequent Menopausal Symptoms

Indian study	Year	Symptoms
Present study	2014	Hot flushes (77%),sleep problem(42%),Joint pain(60), Cold hand/feet (27%),Vagina dryness(34%),Weight gain(69%),Headache(43%),Irritability(42%), Forgetfulness (59%),Anxiety (42%).
Bansal et al	2010	Headache (94.1%), dizzy spells (81.5%), decreased libido (81.5%), sleep disturbance (68.9%) and loss of interest in most things. hot flushes (59.3%), lack of concentration (54.1%), mood changes (49.6%) and night sweats (35.6%).
Madhukumar&Gaikwad	2012	Aching in muscle and joints, feeling tired, poor memory, lower backache and difficulty in sleeping.
Borker et al	2013	Depression, irritability(90.7%), headache (72.9%), lethargy 65.4%), dysuria (58.9%), forgetfulness (57%), musculoskeletal problems(53.3%), sexual problems (decreased libido, dyspareunia) (31.8%), genital problems (itching, vaginal dryness) (9.3%).
Sarker et al	2014	Joint pain (64%),backache (58%),irritability(56.66%),forgetfulness and sadness(48%) and vasomotor symptoms like hot flushes and night sweats(47.33%).
Sharma et al Jammu	2007	Fatigue & lack of energy (72.93%), Headache (55.9%), Hot flushes, Cold sweats, cold hand and feet 53.86 %, Weight gain (43.13%)
Bagga A,(Pune)	2004	Loss of interest (93%), Pressure/tightness in head(83%) Weight gain (67%), Hot flushes (54%)
Shah,et al (Mumbai)	2004	Muscle and joint pains(37.4%), Insomnia(20.6%),Headache(13.8%)
Singh& Arora(Punjab)	2005	Diminished acuity of vision and hot flushes
Outside india		
Schnatz et al (USA)	2005	Mood swings (77.9%), Decrease in energy (75.9%), Sleeping problems (73.4%), Memory problems (67.1%)
Kim et al (Korea)	2003	Fatigue, Hot flushes, benumbed hands and feet, Irritability
American Women	1996	Weight gain (61.5%), Ache in back of neck & skull (53.8%), Fatigue & lack of energy (53.0%), Headache (45.7%)

V. CONCLUSION

According to Hill (1995) the number of postmenopausal women in the world will rise from 467 million in 1990 to 1.2 billion by 2030. Most of the increase in number will occur in developing countries. Sulak (1996) also reports that in the next 20 years, more women will experience perimenopause and menopause than ever before since they comprise the baby boomer generation. Early life expectancy was shorter. Reaching menopause often meant that their life was nearing an end. But this is no longer true. Today women are living longer. Today's women will live a third of her life after menopause. By educating her, and planning ahead for this time of challenges and opportunities, every woman can make this period as one of the most rewarding and enriching time of her life. The real importance of menopause today lies in the increasing longevity of the 21st century woman. By making wise decisions about menopause and healthy lifestyle, we can make the most of the 20, 30, or more years we have ahead.

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