

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Quality of Life (QOL) of postmenopausal women in the Rural Area of Hyderabad District, Pakistan: A cross-sectional study

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To determine and evaluate the factors that affect the quality of life of women going through menopause.

Study design: A cross-sectional study

Place and Duration: This study was conducted Hyderabad District, Pakistan, from January 2021 to March 2021.

Methodology: A total of 110 postmenopausal women were a part of the study from the ages of 45 to 65. The selection of women was done using a convenient sampling method. Consent was taken from the participants before including them in the study. A semi-structured questionnaire with a MENQOL scale with interview method was used for the collection of primary data. The analysis of the data was done using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics, SD, percentages, and mean were calculated. Factors at 5% α were determined using the chi-square test.

Results: A total of 29% of women got menopause before 40 years of age. A total of 11% of the women were premenopausal. Hysterectomy was found in 20% of the women. A total of 33% of women displayed vasomotor symptoms. Physiological symptoms were found in 47% of the women. A total of 15% of women displayed sexual problems and 66% displayed physical symptoms.

Conclusion: In order to make menopause easier for women, supportive therapy, choice of lifestyle modification, and family support are needed. In order to accomplish this, intense and detailed health education is required for premenopausal and postmenopausal women as well as the entire community.

Keywords: Menopause, women, quality of Life

INTRODUCTION

A transition period comes in the life of every woman after crossing a certain age (1). The end of menstruation brings menopause, in which the woman can no longer reproduce (2). Research shows that women who are in the premenopausal and peri-menopausal time experience symptoms such as night sweats, mood disorders, hot flashes, sleep disorders, nervousness, insomnia, impaired memory, depression, lack of concentration, reduction of muscle mass, and joint and bone pains (3) (4). It is essential to create awareness amongst women about the symptoms of menopause. By doing so, the symptoms will be recognized on time, the fear and discomfort could be reduced, and they will be able to get the required medical help if needed (5) (6) (7). The national health authorities must evaluate post-menopausal women and promote education on how to help and deal with the needs of postmenopausal women (8). Therefore, this study was conducted in order to determine and evaluate the factors that affect the quality of life of women going through menopause in rural areas of Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional community-based study was conducted in Hyderabad District of Pakistan from January 2021 to March 2021. The permission was taken from the ethical review committee of the institute. The duration of the study was 3 months and menopausal women took part in the study. A total of 110 women were a part of the study from the ages of 45 to 65 years. The selection of women

was done using a convenient sampling method. A semi-structured questionnaire with MENQOL scale with an interview method was used for the collection of primary data. The questionnaire collected information such as morbidity, physical exercise, diet, gynecological history, and demographical profile from the participants of the study. The MEQOL scale helped evaluate the quality of life under all four domains. Consent was taken in written form from the participants before including them in the study. The scale consisted of four domains: psychosocial, sexual, vasomotor, and physical. The score was divided into three categories: mild, moderate, and severe. After entering the data on MS Excel, it was analyzed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics, SD, percentages, and mean were calculated for the four domains. The relationship between the QOL domains and the variables was calculated at a 5% level of significance using the chi-square test.

RESULTS

In this study, 29% of women got menopause before 40 years of age. A total of 40% of women aged between 45 to 50 years experienced menopausal symptoms. Between 55 to 60 years, 31% of women attained menopause. 11% of the women were pre-menopausal. Hysterectomy was found in 20% of the women. A total of 33% of women displayed vasomotor symptoms. Physiological symptoms were found in 47% of the women, while 15% of women displayed sexual problems and 66% displayed physical symptoms. Out of all the women studied, 60% were illiterate, 75% of the total women were housewives and 18% of the women

were unskilled. A total of 60% of the women were married while 30% were widows. A total of 49% of the women had 1 or 2 children while 40% had 3 to 4 children. The age of menarche was 10 to 15 years in 80% of the women. A total of 25% of the women had 1 or 2 abortions. Tables 1 to 4 explain the percentage of symptoms of each domain after the score conversion.

Table 1: Vasomotor symptoms of menopausal symptoms

VASOMOTOR SYMPTOMS	Percentage
Sweating	40
Night sweats	38
Hot flashes	22

Table 2: Sexual symptoms of postmenopausal women

SEXUAL SYMPTOMS	Percentage
Avoiding intimacy	30
Change in sexual desire	18
Vaginal dryness during sex	4

Table 3: Psychosocial symptoms of postmenopausal women

PSYCHOSOCIAL SYMPTOMS	Percentage
Anxiety/nervousness	56
Dipressed/sad	43
Poor memory	69
Dissatisfied with my personal life	37
Wanting to be alone	14
Impatient	40

Table 4: Physical symptoms of menopausal women

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS	Percentage
Feeling tired	78
Decrease in stamina	79
Aching in muscles and joints	81
Difficulty in sleeping	69
Low backache	79
Lack of energy	80
Decrease in physical strength	78
Leg pain or cramps	79
Aches in back of neck/head	67
Weight gain	27
Feeling bloated	32
Drying skin	30
Changes in appearance	24
Frequent urination	45
Feeling bloated	32
Breast pain or tenderness	30
Involuntary urination when laughing/ coughing	24
Vaginal bleeding or spotting	6

DISCUSSION

In our study, only 11% of the women were in menopausal transition which compared to other studies held is very less. The mean age where menopause began in our study was 44 years, which is similar to other studies done on QOL among women experiencing post-menopause (9). The severity levels of the four domains, that is physical, vasomotor, sexual, and psychosocial, were lack of energy, poor memory, and backache (10) (11). Most women reported aches in muscles and joints, a decrease in stamina, lower back pain, and leg pain (12) (13). General weakness and low energy is common symptom in menopausal women (14) (15). Demographics affect the frequency of symptoms (16). In our study, 22% of women experienced hot flashes, 69% experienced poor memory,

56% experienced anxiety, and 43% experienced depression. Women living in both urban and rural areas experience these symptoms (17). Hot flashes and sweating are reported to be the most severe symptoms, however, in our study night sweats and hot flashes were the least bothered symptom (18). Studies show that hormonal replacement therapy can help women experiencing menopause or premenopausal symptoms (19) (20).

CONCLUSION

In order to make menopause easier for women, supportive therapy, choice of lifestyle modification, and family support are needed. In order to accomplish this, intense and detailed health education is required for premenopausal and postmenopausal women as well as the entire community.

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