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Correspondence

Ms. Mangal Maya Prajapati
Nursing Incharge
Civil Service Hospital
Kathmandu
Nepal
Email:
mangalprajapati6634@gmail.com

Peer Reviewers

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Priscilla Samson
Patan Academy of Health
Sciences

Assoc. Prof. Shital Bhandary
Patan Academy of Health
Sciences

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Awareness regarding menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life of postmenopausal women

Mangal Maya Prajapati*  

Nursing Incharge, Civil Service Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal

**During study period, author was Masters of Nursing student at Lalitpur Nursing Campus, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Patan Academy of Health Sciences, Lalitpur Kathmandu, Nepal.*

Abstract

Introduction: Menopause is permanent cessation of menstruation at the end of reproductive life due to loss of ovarian follicular activity and hormone deficiency which causes various symptoms and negative effects on life. This study aimed to find out the awareness level of menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life of postmenopausal women.

Method: A cross sectional study was conducted during April 2018 to February 2019 to find out the awareness level of menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life among postmenopausal women attending female outpatient department of Patan Hospital, Nepal. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used. Data were collected using structured interview schedule. The SPSS version 16 software was used for data analysis. The association between variables was measured by chi-square test

Result: Among 160 postmenopausal women, the overall awareness of menopausal symptoms was inadequate in 130 (81.2%), effect on daily activities in 95 (59.3%), on work efficiency in 94(58.8%) and on social activities in 69 (43.2%). Educational, marital and occupational status were significantly associated with awareness level of menopausal symptoms and the symptoms had significant effect on daily life.

Conclusion: The study revealed that more than two third of postmenopausal women had inadequate awareness of menopausal symptoms and more than half had effect on daily life. Educational, marital and occupational status were significantly associated with awareness level.

Keyword: effect on daily life, menopause, menopausal symptoms

Introduction

By the year 2030, estimated 1200 million women will be aged 50 years or over and experience menopause.¹ With increasing population of menopausal women, spending one third of their life time during postmenopausal period, the menopausal health and related issues are major responsibilities of any nation.² People suffering from various menopausal health problems like heart disease and osteoporosis, also causes physical and psychological health burden.³

Studies from India on urban versus rural women reports low level of awareness of postmenopausal symptoms. Similarly, 59.2% had low awareness reported from Nepal.⁵ Another study from Kathmandu, Nepal, observed that the menopausal symptoms interfered with the women's daily work in 46%, affected family life in 28% and social life in 32%.³

The study aimed to assess the level of awareness regarding menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life of postmenopausal women so that they could seek prompt treatment and reduce morbidity related to menopausal symptoms.

Method

A cross sectional study was conducted on postmenopausal women of 45-55 years age at Gyne OPD and Female OPD of Patan hospital from April 2018 to February 2019.

The total number of menopausal age group (45 to 55 years) attending female OPD in the month of April was 436. Sample size was calculated by using Slovincs formula: $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$. Where n=number of samples, N=total population and e=margin of error: 0.05. The calculated sample was 208, a 10% addition for contingency such as non-response or recording error, the final sample size was 228. For this study, because of time constrain and excluding holidays, 160 sample

was taken. Data was collected from 8-10 participants per day through face to face interview by using structured interview schedule in Nepali version at corner of room in Female OPD of Patan hospital. A structured interview schedule was used to assess awareness regarding menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life.

The questionnaire contained three parts:

Part I: contained information regarding socio-demography (age, education, occupation, marital status, and age at menopause)

Part II: contained 15 questions related to awareness regarding menopausal symptoms. Question number 6, 7 and 8 were multiple choice questions, 9 and 10 were Yes/No questions and total score was 15.

Part III: contained modified Menopause Rating Scale (MRS) questionnaires for assessing menopausal symptoms experienced by the respondents and effect on daily life related questionnaires were based on rating scale.⁷

The modified MRS questionnaire, contained 11 items, each item was scored 0 to 4 and total score was 44, where, 0= not symptom present, 1=mild, 2=moderate 3=severe 4=very severe.

For assessing the effect of menopausal symptoms in daily life, it had 7 questions, each was scored 0 to 4, where, 0= not present, 1=mild, 2=moderate 3=severe 4=very severe and total score was 28.⁸

Awareness was scored as adequate for score of >75%, moderately adequate 51-75% and inadequate less or equal to $\leq 50\%$.⁹ Effect of menopausal symptoms were evaluated by using percentile score where, mild (<25%), moderate (25-50%), severe (50-75%) and very severe effect (>75%).

The reliability of the instrument was done by doing pre-testing in 10% of sample size of 160, i.e. 16 in women in outpatient of Patan

Hospital. Ethical approval was obtained from Institutional Review Committee (IRC) of Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS). Verbal consent was obtained from participants. The data was analyzed with Chi-square test and Fisher exact test to examine the association among dependent and independent variables, $p < 0.05$ was considered significant.

Result

Out of 160 menopausal women of 45-55 years age included in this study, half 81 (50.6%) belonged to age group 50-55 years. one third 60 (37.5%) illiterate 145 (90.6%) married, 66 (41.3%) house makers, 65 (40.6%) had

menopause between age 45-50 years. The mean age of menopause was 47.7 year. One hundred and thirty (81.2%) respondents had inadequate level of awareness, Table 1.

Ninety-five (59.3%) had effect on daily activities, 94 (58.8%) on work efficiency and 69 (43.2%) on social activities, Table 2.

The association between educational status, marital status and occupation with awareness level regarding menopausal symptoms was statistically significant, $p < 0.05$, Table 3. The association between menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life was statistically significant, $p < 0.05$, Table 4.

Table 1. Awareness level of menopausal women on menopausal symptoms, N =160

Awareness level	Frequency	Percent
Inadequate(<50%)	130	81.2
Moderately adequate (50-75%)	24	15
Adequate (>75%)	6	3.8
Mean±SD= 30.08 ±20.25		

Table 2. Level of effect of menopausal symptoms on daily Life of menopausal women, N =160

Variables	Mild (<25%)	Moderate (25-50)%	Severe (50-75)%	Total (Yes effect)	Total (No effect)
Frequency (Percent)					
Effect of menopause					
Daily activities	50 (31.3)	42 (26.3)	3 ((1.9))	95 (59.3)	65 (40.7)
Work efficiency	56 (35.0)	36 (22.5)	2 (1.3)	94 (58.8)	66 (41.2)
Social activities	46 (28.8)	22 (13.8)	1 (0.6)	69 (43.2)	91 (56.8)

Table 3. Association of demographic variables and level of awareness regarding menopausal symptoms, N=160

Variables	Inadequate	Adequate	χ^2	P value
Frequency/Percent				
Age(years)				
45-50	66 (81.5)	15 (18.5)	0.006	0.932
50-55	64 (81.0)	15 (19.0)		
Educational status				
Illiterate	54 (90.0)	6 (10.0)	3.955	0.047*
Literate	76 (77.6)	22 (22.4)		
Marital status				
Single	6 (40.0)	9 (60.0)	18.487	0.000*
Married	124 (85.5)	21 (14.5)		
Occupation				
Worker	60 (90.9)	6 (9.1)	6.880	0.009*
Non worker	70 (74.5)	24 (25.5)		
Age of menopause				
<45	45 (83.3)	9 (16.7)	0.039	0.843
≥ 45	87 (82.1)	19 (17.9)		

p value<0.05=significant* χ^2 : Chi square test

Table 4. Association between menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life of menopausal women, N=160

Menopausal symptoms	Effect on Daily life		χ^2	p-value
	No/mild	Moderate to severe		
No and mild	65 (97)	2 (347)	40.05	0.000*
Moderate to severe	47 (50.5)	46 (49.5)		

Note: p-value<0.05=significant χ^2 =chi-square *(fisher exact test)

Discussion

The present study revealed that majority of menopausal women 130 (81.2%) had inadequate level of awareness and only 30 (18.8%) had adequate level of awareness regarding menopausal symptoms. Various studies have shown similar findings of inadequate awareness on knowledge about menopausal symptoms, 60% (40) from India¹¹ and 59.2% (n=1184) from Nepal.⁵ In contrast the study from Qatar¹⁰ reports 72.7% (n=160) had good awareness and another study from India¹² reports 92% (n=138) adequate awareness about menopausal symptoms.

This study showed menopausal symptoms affected daily activities in 95(59.3%) severe in 3 (1.9%), work efficiency 94(58.8%) and social activities in 69(43.2%). Study conducted in Malaysia showed 52.4% (n=134) women felt it affected their quality of life, 7(2.7%) severe affect.¹³ Study conducted in Nepal showed nearly half of women had impact of menopausal symptoms in their life. Among them effect in work efficiency was 46%(46) and effect in social life was 32% (n=32) which was similar to the findings of this study.³

On the contrary another findings on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions towards menopause among highly educated Asian women showed that only 30% (n=60) had altered work capability and loss of femininity.¹⁴

The result of study showed statistically significant association between educational, marital and occupational status with menopausal symptoms, p value 0.047, 0.000 and 0.009 respectively. The Iranian study shows similar significant association between educational status, occupation with awareness regarding menopausal symptoms

but no significant association with in marital status.¹⁰

The present study demonstrated that statistically significant association between menopausal symptoms and effect on daily life, p-0.00. Similar significant association between menopausal symptoms and effect has been reported in other studies.¹⁵ A study from Nepal showed nearly half of women had impact of menopausal symptoms effect on daily life.³

Conclusion

This current study more than two third of the menopausal women had inadequate level of awareness regarding menopausal symptoms. More than half of respondents had effect on their daily activities and work efficiency; and nearly half of them had effect in social activities.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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Supplements

Questionnaires

The questionnaires are divided into three parts.

Part I

Demographic information

1. What is your completed age?

.....

2. Educational status:

a. Illiterate:

b. Literate:

- If literate,
c. Primary:
d. Secondary:
e. Higher level

3. Marital status
a. Married:
b. Unmarried:
c. Widow:
d. Divorced:

4. Occupational status:
a. House makers:
b. Service:
c. Business:
d. Agriculture:
e. Others:

5. Onset age of menopause :
.....

Part II

Questionnaire related to awareness regarding menopausal symptoms

6. What is menopause?
a. Irregular menstruation.
b. Stopping of menstruation due to disease condition
c. Stopping of menses for 12 months.
d. Stopping of menstruation due to age

7. At which age, generally menopause occur?
.....

8. What are the causes of menopause?
a. Hormonal imbalance
b. Due to disease condition
c. Normal body process
d. Don't know

9. Do you know about the symptoms of menopause? Yes No

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|------|
| A. Physical problems | [Yes] | [No] |
| a. Hot flushes and nights sweats | | |
| b. Vaginal dryness | | |
| c. Joint pain | | |
| d. loss of interest in sex | | |
| e. Palpitation | | |
| f. Decrease vision acuity | | |

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|------|
| B. Psychological problems | [Yes] | [No] |
| a. Sleep problem | | |
| b. Anxiety | | |
| c. Sadness | | |
| d. Irritability | | |

10. Do you know about treatment against menopause symptoms?

- a. Yes b. No
 If yes, please specify.....

PART III

The following questions are related to perceived menopausal symptoms on the basis of Modified Menopause Rating Scale (MRS)

11. Menopausal symptoms experienced by respondents

SNs	1) Physical symptoms	Not at all	Mild	moderate	severe	Very severe
a.	Hot flushes and nights sweats					
b.	Heart discomfort					
c.	Dryness of vagina					
d.	Bladder problems					
e.	Joint and muscular pain					
f.	Sexual problems					
G	Decrease vision acuity					
	2) Psychological symptoms					
a.	Irritability					
b.	Anxiety					
c.	Sleep problems					
d.	Sad mood					

Questionnaires related to effect of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.

12. Related to daily activities	Not at all	Mild	moderate	severe	Very severe
a. Are you having difficulty to perform personal care?					
b. Do you have difficulty in performing household chores?					
c. Is there any problem in cooking food?					
13. Related to social activities					
a. Are you having difficulty to attend gathering?					
b. Do you have problem in visiting temples for worship?					
14. Related to work (job, agriculture and others) efficiency					
a. Are you feeling less work due to menopausal symptoms?					
b. Have your work discontinued ?					