ORIGINAL ARTICLE

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS MENOPAUSE IN MIDDLE AGED PAKISTANI WOMEN

Rehana Yasmeen1, Rubina Hussain1, Shama Chaudhry1, Afiya Waheed1
1Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Dr. Ziauddin Hospitals, Karachi, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

Background: Menopause lead to changes in women’s physiological functioning. It has significant physical, mental, social and psychological impact on women’s life. The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge and attitude of middle age women toward the menopause.

Methods: A cross sectional study based on sample of convenience was conducted at the outpatient department of Ziauddin Hospital, Karachi from 1st July 2014 to 31st January 2015. The study participants were 250 menopausal women between the ages of 45-60 years. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire, which consists of three parts containing questions about demographic information, knowledge and attitude.

Results: The mean age of women in the current study was 51.9 +/- 4.2 years (range 45 - 60 years). The mean age at menopause was 45.9 +/- 3.8 years. As far as the knowledge about menopause is concerned 4.8% (12women) had weak, 71.2% (178women) had moderate and 24% (60women) had good knowledge about menopause phenomenon. Majority of respondents had positive (72.4%) attitude towards menopause and 27.6% had negative attitude towards menopause.

Conclusion: Majority of women in the current study had moderate knowledge about menopause. Women’s attitude towards menopause in majority of women was positive and they perceived menopause as a natural event and not a disease. The study reflects that the respondents widely varied in their ideas about the mean age of menopause as well as about the impact of menopause on their routine life.

KEY WORDS: Menopause, knowledge, attitude, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Menopause is a physiological and biological phenomenon marking the end of women’s reproductive life due to ovarian failure. Natural menopause occurs between the ages of 45-55 years.¹ Women are greater in population, their life expectancy and average age is more than men, but they face specific problems resulting from the natural and physiological conditions related to menopause transition which make them feel disabled and imperfect. It is an important natural process occurring in women’s life and marked by cessation of menstruation and end of fertility.² The average age at menopause in Pakistan is estimated to be 49.3 years, while female life expectancy is 67 years.³⁴ The definition of menopause according to World Health Organization (WHO) is the permanent cessation of menstruation as a result of loss of ovarian activity. Menopausal period play an important role in the reproductive life of a woman and gives rise to many physical and mental changes. Life expectancy is increasing, age at menopause remains relatively unchanged, and so women are spending more of their lives in the postmenopausal period.⁵ The prevalence of menopausal symptoms is 80%, it means that more than 80% of older women experience physical or psychological symptoms in the years approaching menopause, which affect their quality of life due various changes and disturbances⁶.

The hormones estrogen and progesterone, integral to reproductive aging are no longer produced.
Menopause is a physiological and biological process that occurs in women, marking the end of their reproductive years. It is an important natural process that affects women of all ages, leading to changes in their physical, psychological, and social functioning. Many women feel disabled during menopause due to the decline in estrogen levels, which affects various bodily functions and can lead to symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and mood changes. These symptoms can have a significant impact on a woman's quality of life.

During menopause, women face various challenges, including a decline in estrogen production and associated changes in their body's physiology. Menopause leads to changes in women's physiological functioning and women who are unable to understand these changes are at risk of becoming more anxious and disturbed. Familiarity with these changes and understanding their reasons is essential in the life of all women, helping them to cope with these changes and leading to a positive attitude towards menopause.

Knowledge is power, and women with proper knowledge can manage their problems and live their lives with adequate knowledge and a positive attitude. According to a local study, 15.8% of postmenopausal women have adequate knowledge about menopause, and symptoms related to menopause.

Methods

A cross-sectional study based on non-probability convenient sampling was conducted at the outpatient department of Ziauddin University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan. The duration of the study was from 1st July 2014 to 31st January 2015.

A total of 250 women of ages 45-60 years attending the outpatient department were interviewed after having written consent. The interviews were carried out by using a questionnaire. There were three parts of the questionnaire, the first part contained socio-demographic information, the second part contains knowledge questions and the third part was about women’s attitude towards menopause. Data analysis was done by using computer software SPSS (Statistical program for social sciences) version 20.

Results

The mean age of respondents in the current study was 51.9 +/- 4.2 years (range 45 - 60 years). The mean age at menopause was 45.9 +/- 3.8 years. Majority of respondents belonged to middle socio-economic class (86.4%) and 106 (42.2%) had received formal education (graduation and masters). Sixty-two (24.8%) completed their education till matriculation. Among the study participants, 67.2% were housewives and 32.8% were working women. Majority of the women (87.6%) were married and had children. Parity ranged from 0-11, only nine women were nulliparous. Ninety-three percent (93%) of women had heard about menopause and 57% were aware of the symptoms. Only a few knew the long-term complications of menopause. Out of 250 women, 233 (93.2%) did not consider menopause to be a medical condition or disease but a natural phenomenon. As far as knowledge about menopause is concerned, 4.8% (12 women) had weak knowledge, 71.2% (178 women) had moderate knowledge, and 24% (60 women) had good knowledge about menopause. The majority of respondents had positive (72.4%) attitude towards menopause and 27.6% had a negative attitude towards menopause. Sixty-four percent (64.4%) of respondents were sexually active but reported decreased frequency. Decrease libido was reported by 35 participants.

Figure 1: Pie chart showing knowledge about menopause.
Menopause is a physiological and biological event occurring in women's life and marked by cessation of menstruation as a result of loss of ovarian function. The World Health Organization (WHO) is the permanent cessation of menstruation during menopause. Menopausal period play an important role in women's life with adequate knowledge and a positive attitude towards menopause. Menopause is the time of dramatic hormonal and psychosocial changes in women's life. More women are exposed to the potential long term effects of menopause due to increasing female life expectancy. The social, cultural and economic settings greatly influence the attitudes of women towards menopause and may also affect the perception towards its symptoms. Menopausal symptoms are experienced by women in all countries of the world but their prevalence varies in different societies. Hot flushes and night sweating is the commonest climacteric symptom experienced in Caucasian population. In the current study majority (93%) of women had heard about menopause. This is comparable to other studies, and (29.7%) had knowledge about symptoms but few knew about long-term health hazards like osteoporosis and cardiac problems. In different ethnic groups attitudes of women towards menopause differed, with African women being the most positive, while Chinese and Japanese American women showed the least positive attitude. In our study majority of women expressed positive (72.4%) attitude towards menopause because of freedom from cyclic bleeding and due to the benefit of uninterrupted sexual activity. It was also observed in other studies. The less educated, older and poor socioeconomic class lack the knowledge about menopause. This finding is consistent with results of other studies.

CONCLUSION

Majority of women in the current study had moderate knowledge about menopause. Women's attitude towards menopause in majority of women was positive and they perceived menopause as a natural event and not a disease. The study reflects that the respondents widely varied in their ideas about the mean age of menopause as well as about the impact of menopause on their routine life. It is the need of time that elderly women should be educated to improve their knowledge and to remove myths and stigmas about menopause. The older women should also be educated through awareness programmes and menopause clinics should be set so that they are able to cope with the increased health risks and long term complications of menopause by adopting a healthy life style.

REFERENCES

The definition of menopause according to World Health Organization (WHO) is the time of menstrual cessation and end of fertility. It usually occurs between the ages of 45–55 years, while female life expectancy is 67 years. Menopause is a physiological and biological event that marks the end of women’s reproductive capacity. The prevalence of menopausal symptoms is 80%, it means that more than 80% of older women experience physical or psychological symptoms in the transition towards menopause. Out of 250 women 233 (93.2%) did not know the long term complications of menopause. 93% of women had heard about menopause. This is consistent with results of other studies. 20. Nir-Caein R, Nahum R, Yogev Y, Rosenfeld J, Fisher M, Kaplan B. Ethnicity and attitude towards menopause and hormone replacement therapy in Northern Israel. Clin Exp Obstet Gynecol 2002; 29: 91-4.

METHODS

The study aimed to perform an action and can start health education towards menopause in elderly women in our population. The study was a cross-sectional study carried out at the patient department of Ziauddin University Hospital, Karachi. The study aimed to identify the knowledge and attitude towards menopause in Pakistan. The study aimed to perform an action and can start health education towards menopause in elderly women in our population. Sixty four percent (64.4%) of women used to regret on cessation of menstruation. In our study majority of the participants were exposed to the potential long term complications of menopause. Out of 250 women 233 (93%) did not know the long term complications of menopause. Percentage of positive and negative attitude towards menopause is concerned 4.8%.

RESULTS

 flushes and night sweating is the commonest symptom reported. The prevalence of menopausal symptoms is 80%, it means that more than 80% of older women experience physical or psychological symptoms in the transition towards menopause. In our study majority of the participants were exposed to the potential long term complications of menopause. Mean age at menopause was 45.9 +/- 3.8 years. Majority of the women (87.6%) were exposed to the potential long term complications of menopause. In the present study, majority of the participants were exposed to the potential long term complications of menopause. Majority of the participants were exposed to the potential long term complications of menopause. In the present study, majority of the participants were exposed to the potential long term complications of menopause. Percentage of positive and negative attitude towards menopause is concerned 4.8%.

DISCUSSION

Menopause lead to changes in women’s physiological and psychological status. This change can cause various physical and mental changes. Life expectancy of menstruation as a result of loss of ovarian function and fasting in addition to fertility cessation are the physiological effects and symptoms related to menopause. The hormones estrogen and progesterone, integral components of the female reproductive system, and the ability to produce progestins and estrogens, are affected during menopause. These include hot flashes, night sweats, breast tenderness, vaginal dryness, irregular menses, mood swings, decreased libido, and increased risk of osteoporosis. As far as the medical point of view, menopause is a natural phenomenon. As far as the medical point of view, menopause is a natural phenomenon. It is consistent with results of other studies. 16. Pan HA, Wu MH, Hsu CC, Yao BL, Huang KE. The perception of menopause among women in Taiwan. J. Maturitas 2002; 41: 269-74.

REFERENCES