



## MENOPAUSE: IMPROVES THE QUALITY OF LIFE

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### INTRODUCTION

Menopause as the permanent cessation of menstruation resulting from the loss of ovarian follicular activity. Menopause is prompted by decline in estrogen and progesterone production, and rising follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) levels. Menopause is time in a woman's life when her periods (menstruation) eventually stop and the body goes through changes that no longer allow her to get pregnant. It is a natural event that normally occurs in women aged 45 to 55 years.<sup>1</sup> Menopause is defined as the time when there have been no menstrual periods for 12 consecutive months and no other biological or physiological cause can be identified. It is the end of fertility, the end of the childbearing years. A woman can usually tell if she is approaching menopause because her menstrual periods starts changing. The medical terms used to describe this time are "perimenopause" and the "menopause transition." "Natural menopause occurs when the ovaries naturally begin decreasing their production of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone."<sup>2</sup>

**Incidence:** The prevalence of menopausal symptoms was found to be 47% Mean (SD) age at menopause was 44.9 (4.9) years. The prevalence of at least one symptom related to vasomotor was 21.3%, physical 91.5%, psychosocial 44.7% and sexual 0%.<sup>3</sup> In India overall, menopause prior to age 40 was reported by approximately 1.5 per cent of women. In the national data set, significant associations with age at natural menopause were identified with marriage breakdown or widowhood, poverty, Muslim religious affiliation, 'scheduled caste' status, not having received schooling, rural residence, having never used contraceptive pills, not been sterilized or had an abortion, low parity and residence in the western region. Within data from five selected States examined separately, the strength of these associations varied.<sup>4</sup> There are currently 65 million Indian women over the age of 45. While the average age of menopause in India is around 46 years, it often strikes women much earlier, even as young as 30-35

years. In 2025 it is presumed that more than 12 % of population will be more than 60 years of age.<sup>5</sup>

**Symptoms:** This happens as the estrogen level decreases and there are changes in the urinary tract, may also feel a frequent urge to urinate other symptoms include insomnia, vaginal dryness, hot flushes and changes in menstrual cycle. This life after menopause is referring to post menopause. There is a wide range of symptoms that women can experience. These can be minimal and menopause passes with little impact. However in some, the symptoms can have a debilitating effect. Symptoms can be variable in length. For most women they last a few years but in some, they can last 10 years or more. The main symptoms of menopause that most women are aware of our vasomotor. These include hotflushes and night sweats and occur in 75% women with 25%. Common symptoms of menopause include:

1. **Vasomotor symptoms:** Hot flushes, night sweats, sweating.
2. **Psychosocial symptoms:** Dissatisfaction with personal life, feeling anxious and nervous, poor memory, feeling down, depressed or low, being impatient with other people, feeling of wanting to be alone.
3. **Physical symptoms:** flatulence, gas pains, aching muscles or joints, feeling tired, difficulty sleeping, aches in back of neck and head, decrease in physical strength, decrease in stamina, feeling lack of energy, dry skin, weight gain, increased facial hairs, changes in appearance, feeling bloating, frequent urination, involuntary urination.
4. **Sexual symptoms:** change in sexual desire, vaginal dryness, avoiding intimacy.<sup>6</sup>

### Management

- Treatment may include hormone replacement therapy. Estrogen therapy is the most effective treatment option for relieving menopausal hot flushes.

- Vaginal estrogen to relieve vaginal dryness, estrogen can be administered directly to the vagina.
- Low dose antidepressants “SSRI” (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) our drug of choice to decrease menopausal hot flushes.<sup>7</sup>

### Role of Nurse

- Menopause can have a significant effect on a women’s quality of life. Their health needs changes significantly and it is important that woman become aware of the new health risks.
- This is nurse prime responsibility to identify the risk factors symptoms of menopause in the women and to give health education to the women clients. This health education can be a general advice, in relation to reducing the risks of osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease, by looking at diet, exercise and basic strategies such as decreasing alcohol and smoking. Another important issue is to take care is to advice for use of contraceptions if woman is under 50 years of age.
- Another group of women who require nursing advice are those who are going to undergo procedures that are likely to lead to the menopause such as hysterectomy.
- Last but not the least advice for the referral. Women who need referral to specialist (Gynecologists) are:
  - ✚ women with history of thrombosis
  - ✚ women with complex comorbidity
  - ✚ previous venous thromboembolism
  - ✚ multiple treatment failure
  - ✚ POI (Primary Ovarian Insufficiency)

**Lifestyle and Home remedies:** Many of the signs and symptoms associated with menopause are temporary. Few steps that helps to reduce or prevent their effects.

- **Cool hot flushed:** try to identify what triggers your hot flushes and avoid those triggers for e.g. Caffeine, spicy foods and alcohol.

- **Decrease vaginal discomfort:** choose products that don’t contain glycerine which may burning or irritation. Being sexually active also help by increasing blood flow to the vagina.
- **Get enough sleep:** take sound sleep to tackle psychological symptoms.
- **Practice relaxation techniques:** deep breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, imagery and massage.
- **Strengthen pelvic floor:** practice kegal exercise which can improve some forms of urinary incontinence.
- **Eat a balanced diet:** include a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Avoid saturated fats, oils and sugar
- **Don’t smoke:** smoking increases risk of heart diseases, stroke, osteoporosis, cancer and other health problems. It may also increase hot flushes and bring early menopause.
- **Exercise regularly:** get regular exercise to help protect against heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and other medical conditions associated with aging.
- **Medication to prevent or treat osteoporosis:** depending on individual needs, doctors may recommend medication to prevent or treat osteoporosis. Vitamin D supplements are useful to strengthen the bones.<sup>8</sup>

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