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Menopausal Symptoms among Postmenopausal Women of North India: A Cross-sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Menopausal health is a major problem in India because of rising population of postmenopausal women.

Objectives: The aim was to determine the mean age of attaining menopause and the prevalence of various menopausal symptoms.

Materials and methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in SNMC of Agra on 218 postmenopausal women from March 2012 to 2015.

Results: The mean age of attaining menopause was 48.26 years. Prevalence of symptoms among ladies were muscle and joint pains (70%), mood swings (65%), low backache (46.7%), hot flush and excessive sweating (45%), change in sexual desire (44%), dryness of vagina (41%), urinary symptoms (35%) and anxiety and irritability in (11%) females.

Conclusion: Thus, study stated that all the women were suffering from one or more number of menopausal symptoms. Women should be made aware of these symptoms, their causes and treatment respectively.

Keywords: Menopausal symptoms, Postmenopausal women, Urinary symptom.

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INTRODUCTION

With the increasing life expectancy, a women spends almost a third of her life in menopause.¹ Menopause is

recognized by all women in all cultures as cessation of menstruation for 1 year. Menopause can thus be said to be a universal reproductive phenomenon. Numerous physical and psychological symptoms have been attributed to the hormonal changes of menopause. This reproductive landmark is not always the same for all women in all cultures. The prevalence of menopausal symptoms varies widely not only among individuals of the same population but also between different ethnic population. Even there is a great diversity in nature of symptom and frequencies across countries, even in the same cultures.^{2,3} Mean age at menopause ranges in Indian women from 40.32 to 48.84 years⁴⁻¹⁷ and in developed countries from 48.0 to 51 years.¹⁸⁻²¹ Studies have been undertaken in past to find out correlation of age and symptomatology of menopause, which also suggest varying trends.^{12,13} 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 menopausal symptoms. This will help in early recognition of symptoms, reduction of discomfort and fears and enable to seek appropriate medical care if necessary. Similar, studies are available in past but still no such study is available from this region. Hence, the present study first of its kind from this region was planned to evaluate menopausal symptoms in women above the age of 40 belonging to the middle socioeconomic strata from Agra as well as to evaluate the correlation of age on these symptoms.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted in SN Medical College of Agra on 218 postmenopausal women from March 2012 to 2015.

All postmenopausal women between the age of 40 and 55 years (Table 1) living in the study area who satisfied the inclusion and exclusion criteria were included in the study. Inclusion criteria for the study were postmenopausal women with at least 1 year of amenorrhea and those who had attained natural menopause in last 5 years. Exclusion criteria include women with a known history of chronic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, tuberculosis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis were excluded from the study.

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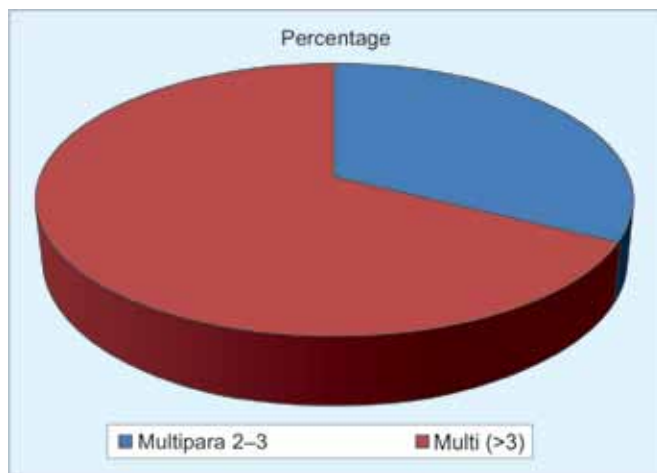
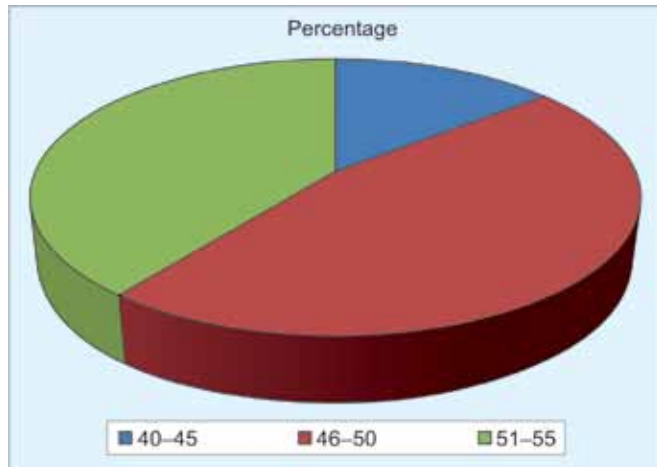
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Table 1: Distribution of postmenopausal women according to age and parity

Age	Number	Percentage
40–45	31	14.2
46–50	121	55.50
51–55	66	30.27
Parity		
Multipara (2–3)	71	32.56
Multi (>3)	147	67.43



RESULTS

A total of 218 postmenopausal women were included in the study.

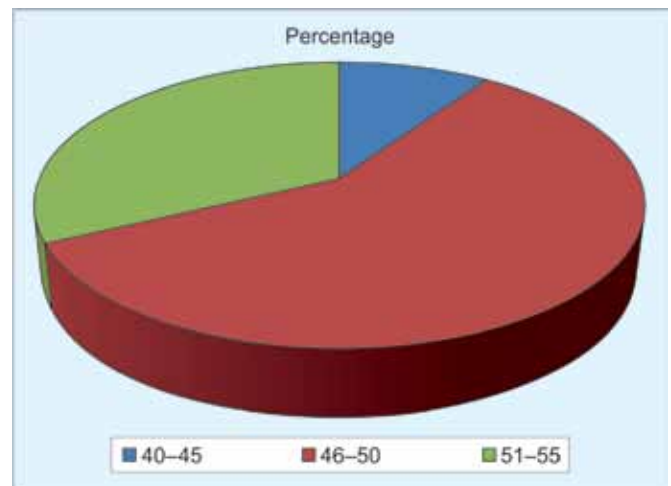
Table 2 shows that most of the females 127 (58.6%) attained their menopause between 46 and 50 years of age group followed by 70 (32.11%) between 51 and 55 years of age group and 21 females (9.6%) attained their menopause in age group of 40 to 45 years.

DISCUSSION

The mean age at menopause observed in our study was 48.2 years. A wide range in mean age at menopause in Indian women from 40.32 to 48.84 years and in developed countries from 48.0 to 51 years have been suggested. Mean age at menopause in Indian women is less in

Table 2: Distribution of postmenopausal women according to age at attaining menopause

Age at attaining menopause	Number	Percentage
40–45	21	9.6
46–50	127	58.25
51–55	70	32.11



comparison to women from developed countries. Mean age at menopause in the present study corresponded with Sengupta and Rjkhowa, Kaw et al, Mastana, Kim et al and Malacara et al.

Common menopausal symptoms vary compared with other reports from India and abroad as shown in Table 3. These diversities probably exist because women experience reduction in estrogen levels in a wide variety of ways with great interindividual variations.

According to my study, muscle and joint pain was present in 70% of cases (in comparison to a study conducted by Shah et al which showed a result of 37.4%), mood swing was present in 65% cases (93% cases showed mood swing according to a study conducted by Bagga in Pune), 45% cases had hot flushes and excessive sweating (whereas in a study conducted by Shah et al 19.4% of cases had hot flushes and 18.6% had excessive sweating), 44% cases had change in sexual desire, 41% cases had dryness of vagina, urinary symptoms were present in 35% of cases and 11% cases had anxiety and irritability.

Table 3: Distribution of postmenopausal women according to menopausal symptoms

Menopausal symptoms	Number	Percentage
Low backache	102	46.7
Muscle and joint pain	152	70
Hot flush and excessive sweating	98	45
Change in sexual desire	95	44
Mood swing	141	65
Dryness of vagina	89	41
Urinary symptoms	76	35
Anxiety and irritability	23	11



CONCLUSION

Thus, study stated that all the women were suffering from one or more number of menopausal symptoms. Women should be made aware of these symptoms, their causes and treatment respectively.

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