

Original article

Cognizance about menopause among women and its importance, a short descriptive study in Baluwatar

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Abstract

Introduction: Globally with the increasing life expectancy, there is growing population of elderly women living after experiencing menopause and thus exposed to potential long term consequences of menopause. According to literature, at least 60% of women suffer from mild symptoms, 20% suffer severe symptoms and 20% are asymptomatic¹. Literature shows variations in reported symptoms in women across regions; Asian women suffer less vasomotor and psychological symptoms than Western women². This study was conducted to determine knowledge, attitude and practice toward menopause among women in Nepal. The most implication of this finding is to help to develop menopausal care guideline and provide information to health educators to design a course on menopause.

Methods: This study was descriptive cross sectional study carried out in Kathmandu metropolitan city, Baluwatar, ward no-4, icchunadi marga, Kathmandu district of Nepal where the respondents (N=380) to assess their awareness of menopause and its importance and effects on health. In addition, the data were collected by using structured questionnaire with the use of simple Nepali language on consent of respondents. Computer software SPSS version 15 was used to scrupulous analysis of study.

Results: 96% participants knew that menopause is the developmental process and every women gets menopause. Majority of respondents (94%) knew that female would not be able to reproduce after menopause, 90% of respondents said the correct age of menopause and 74% of them were agreed regarding the need of education for family member about menopause. The lowest percentage of respondents (32%) knew that smoking may affect menopause. Majority of respondents 56% knew symptoms of irregular bleeding, 30% of respondents had headache, 28% with irritability, 24% with loss of sexual interest and only 22% of respondents knew hot flushes and night sweating. In addition, family is the most effective source of information. In this study, 64% participants had heard about menopause from their family, followed by friends 28%, and lowest sources of information were the school/college 6% and health personnel 2%. Likewise, majority of respondents 74% consulted the doctor for perimenopausal symptoms whereas minority of the respondents 2% consulted friends.

Conclusion: Under several myths and taboo relating to menopause in our country, majority of women mainly of rural and even urban areas feel dejected and dispirited and make sometime life miserable with lack of knowledge of menopause. With increasing life expectancy, women spend 1/3rd of life in this phase, thus knowledge and awareness is vital point in every aspect. Thus the present study seems to be of small scale study, but, may have higher impact to invoke the researcher out there to do large scale study, to create new syllabic for students of college or at higher level management policy maker to take it seriously on the health of women who is backbone of family and thus country, Nepal.

Key Words: Menopause, Nepal, Women

Introduction

Menopausal changes in endometrium of uterus occur at 50 yrs of age with the withdrawal of progesterone, where women experience vasomotor instability, emotional disturbance and physiological changes. Due to lack of

knowledge regarding menopause in women of Nepal, some say it as the normal phenomenon whereas other say is due to some evil act, and very few know real cause of menopause. However, our study is focused only on urban area where it has been revealed that the woman of this area have devoid of the knowledge toward menopause.

If we see globally, nowadays women are the backbone of family health, in relation to health management of family members or training and propagating the healthy lifestyle by the members to the next generation, despite the fact, women faces some sort of emotional imperfection and disability regarding the natural phenomenon of menopausal transition period³.

The wholesome cognizance of women of menopause regarding certain physical, mental and psychological changes may be very much helpful for them to cope up with these changes and the purpose of this study is to have a small idea on the knowledge and attitude of women toward the menopausal phenomenon in small area, such that one can formulate the new idea for further research in this area elsewhere in the district or even the country, which would be helpful in health field.

Results

Table 1. Distribution of participants based on their knowledge regarding menopause.(N=380)

Knowledge regarding menopause	Total No. of observation(f)	Percentage (%)
Menopause is the developmental process	365	96
Menopause occurs at the age of 45-55 yrs	342	90
Every women gets menopause	365	96
Female would not be able to reproduce after menopause	357	94
Smoking may affect the menopause	122	32
Good nutrition and regular exercise can reduce the perimenopausal symptoms	55	38
Bone & heart problems may arise after menopause	137	36
Regular checkup is needed after menopause	182	48
Education about menopause is needed for family members	296	78

96% participants knew that menopause is the developmental process and every women gets menopause. Majority of respondents (94%) knew that female would not be able to reproduce after menopause, 90% of respondents said the correct age of menopause and 74% of them were agreed regarding the need of education for family member about menopause. The lowest percentage of respondents 32% knew that smoking may affect menopause as stated in above table.

Table 2.Frequency of respondents according to knowledge & information of perimenopausal sign and symptoms (N=380)

Items	No of observation out of total	Percentage %
Knowledge about perimenopausal signs and symptoms	Irregular bleeding	213
	Headache	114
	Irritability	106
	Loss of sexual interest	91
	Hot flushes and night sweating	84
Source of information about perimenopausal signs and symptoms	Family	243
	Friends	106
	School/college	23
	Health personnel	8
Consultation for about perimenopausal signs and symptoms	Doctor	281
	Traditional healer	53
	Family	38
	Friends	8

Majority of respondents 56% knew irregular bleeding, 30% of respondents had headache, 28% with irritability, 24% with loss of sexual interest and only 22% of respondents knew hot flushes and night sweating. In addition, family is the most effective source of information. In this study, 64% participants had heard about menopause from their family, followed by friends 28%, and lowest sources of information were the school/college 6% and health personnel 2%. Likewise, majority of respondents 74% consulted the doctor for perimenopausal symptoms whereas minority of the respondents 2% consulted friends.

Discussion

Under the deficiency of estrogen due to loss of ovarian follicle yield into permanent cessation of menstrual bleeding known to be menopause have different signs and symptoms^{4,5}. According to literature, with increment of life expectancy of women above 50 yrs of age⁶ the emotional turmoil seems to more with increment of gynecological problem and if there is lack of knowledge of premenopausal symptoms, then it enhances it more^{7,8,9}. However our study shows that; 96% participants knew that menopause is the developmental process and every women gets menopause, majority of respondents (94%) knew that female would not be able to reproduce after menopause, 90% of respondents said the correct age of menopause and 74% of them were agreed regarding the need of education for family member about menopause. Majority of respondents 56% knew irregular bleeding, 30% of respondents had headache, 28% with irritability, 24% with loss of sexual interest and only 22% of respondents knew hot flushes and night sweating. In addition, family is the most effective source of information. In this study, 64% participants had heard about menopause from their family, followed by friends 28%, and lowest sources of information were the school/college 6% and health personnel 2%. Likewise, majority of respondents 74% consulted the doctor for perimenopausal symptoms whereas minority of the respondents 2% consulted friends. The age of forty is an important in woman's medical life. This may be the beginning of declining estrogen and its short and long term consequences, thus, appropriate knowledge regarding menopause among women are mandatory, where one can have relevant use of hormone replacement therapy or other sort of medication or physical and mental support from family & friends, which is to be provided to have her good health and thus improvement environment of family certainly.

Conclusions

Most of the participants knew that menopause is the developmental process and every woman get menopause. Majority of respondents knew irregular bleeding whereas less of respondents knew hot flushes

and night sweating. The most implication of this finding is to help to develop menopausal guideline and give information to health educator to design a course including menopause.

Conflict of interest: None declared

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