

## Age at menopause and prevalence of symptoms among early postmenopausal women in suburban Chandigarh, India

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Menopause marks the end of women's reproductive life and is period of rapid change in hormonal balance associated with a number of symptoms. In youth oriented Western cultures, menopause is frequently intertwined with fears of aging, loss of status and loss of sexuality. Women have been reported to welcome menopause in developing countries like India, Thailand, Zimbabwe and Israel. Literature on this topic is, however, scarce in India. The present study was therefore conducted to ascertain the age at menopause and prevalence of menopausal symptoms among early postmenopausal women in India.

**Material and Methods:** The target population consisted of all the women aged 40-60 years living in Dhanas colony that had their last menstrual period 12 months prior or earlier. All the houses were surveyed. Each woman was interviewed individually. The research proposal was approved by the Institute Ethics Committee before initiating the survey.

**Results:** The total population of the study area was 16500. Of the 725 women aged 40-60 years enlisted for the study, 298 (41%) had attained menopause, 47 (6.5%) were in the transitional phase and 43 (5.9%) had undergone hysterectomy. Early postmenopausal phase of their lives (within 10 year of menopause) was studied for 245 subjects (82.2% of total 298 women). In this study, mean age at menopause was found to be 46.85 years. No symptoms were experienced by 26 (8.7%) subjects on attaining menopause. When asked which was the first symptom experienced by them, diminished acuity of vision (n=66 (22.1%)), joint pain/body ache and swelling on body/feet (n=59 (19.8%)), high blood pressure (n=22 (7.4%)), headache (n=16 (5.4%)), hot flushes/burning sensation in feet (n=19 (6.4%)), and sweating (n=9 (3.0%)) were enumerated by the majority of the respondents. The rest of the respondents (n=66 (22.1%)) reported other symptoms, such as leucorrhoea, weight gain, irritability, breathlessness, vulval itching and sexual problems. Our study revealed that, by and large, menopause was viewed positively by women in a suburban area of Chandigarh, India.

**Conclusion:** Although north Indian women experienced various symptoms at menopause, they largely ignored these, while welcoming the freedom from menstruation related worries.

### Biography

Sukhwinder Kaur has completed her Ph.D. at the age of 39+ years from Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India. She is working as a Lecturer in National Institute of Nursing Education, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India. She has been honored with Glory of India award and Global Achievers award at Bangkok, Thailand in 2012 and 2013 and also awarded Rashtriya Gaurav award at New Delhi, India in 2012. She has published more than 10 papers in reputed journals and written chapters in books. She completed two institute projects. She has presented 4 papers at London, Japan and Madrid Spain and more than 15 in India.

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