



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Nursing

DEPRESSION IN MENOPAUSAL WOMEN

KEY WORDS:

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MENOPAUSE

Menopause is a transition phase from the reproductive to the non reproductive phase in a woman's life. It is nature's protective phenomenon against reproductive morbidity and mortality in the aging population. Menopause is diagnosed retrospectively by history. Markers for diagnosis of menopause are preferably restricted for use in special situations and for fertility issues. Levels of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) >10 IU/L are indicative of declining ovarian function. FSH levels >20 IU/L are diagnostic of ovarian insufficiency in the peri menopausal age group with vasomotor symptoms (VMS), even in the absence of cessation of menstruation. The average age of menopause is 51, with the transition occurring most often between the ages of 45 and 55. Changes during menopause occur due to decrease estrogen with increased progesteron level.

Symptoms Of Menopause

Menopausal women might experience these signs and symptoms:

- Irregular periods
- Vaginal dryness
- Hot flashes
- Chills
- Night sweats
- Sleep problems
- Mood changes
- Weight gain and slowed metabolism
- Thinning hair and dry skin
- Loss of breast fullness

Causes

Menopause can result from:

- Naturally declining reproductive hormones.
- Surgery that removes the ovaries (oophorectomy).
- Chemotherapy and radiation therapy.
- Primary ovarian insufficiency.

Complications

- **Heart and blood vessel (cardiovascular) disease.**
- **Osteoporosis.**
- **Urinary incontinence**
- **Sexual function.**
- **Weight gain.**

Depression

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how one feel, think and behave and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. The person may have trouble doing normal day-to-day activities, and sometimes they may feel as if life isn't worth living.

Symptoms

People typically have multiple episodes of depression

- Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters

- Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, such as sex, hobbies or sports
- Sleep disturbances, including insomnia or sleeping too much
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort
- Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased cravings for food and weight gain
- Anxiety, agitation or restlessness
- Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on past failures or self-blame
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Frequent or recurrent thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or suicide
- Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches

For many people with depression, symptoms usually are severe enough to cause noticeable problems in day-to-day activities, such as work, school, social activities or relationships with others. Some people may feel generally miserable or unhappy without really knowing why.

Depression Symptoms In Older Adults

Depression is not a normal part of growing older, and it should never be taken lightly. Unfortunately, depression often goes undiagnosed and untreated in older adults, and they may feel reluctant to seek help. Symptoms of depression may be different or less obvious in older adults, such as:

- Memory difficulties or personality changes
- Physical aches or pain
- Fatigue, loss of appetite, sleep problems or loss of interest in sex — not caused by a medical condition or medication
- Often wanting to stay at home, rather than going out to socialize or doing new things
- Suicidal thinking or feelings, especially in older men

When To Get Emergency Help

If you think you may hurt yourself or attempt suicide, call your local emergency number immediately.

Also consider these options if you're having suicidal thoughts:

- Call your doctor or mental health professional.
- Contact a suicide hotline.
- Reach out to a close friend or loved one.
- Contact a spiritual leader or someone else in your faith community.

If you have a loved one who is in danger of suicide or has made a suicide attempt, make sure someone stays with that person. Call your local emergency number immediately. Or, if you think you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room.

How They Are Related

Many women going through perimenopause or menopause can tell you that extreme shifts in hormonal levels often lead to feelings of depression. Whether it's a new onset of depressive symptoms or exaggerated symptoms from an existing

diagnosis, managing the mood swings along with other symptoms can, at times, feel very overwhelming.

It is only recently that the medical community created guidelines for the evaluation and treatment of perimenopausal depression.

Some of the challenge in evaluating perimenopausal depression is due to the fact that several of the symptoms related to its hormonal changes overlap with common symptoms of depression and other menopausal symptoms that often present similarly.

Treatment

menopausal women diagnosed with depression , therapeutic options are antidepressants and/or psychotherapy (“talk therapy”). There are several forms of psychotherapy, but one in particular that has been proven successful in treating depression is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT). There is some evidence that treating women entering menopause with hormone replacement therapy may help to enhance mood, but it is not considered a form of treatment for depression. Some findings suggest yoga therapy, which can help reduce hot flashes and night sweats, may also help with mild to moderate symptoms related to mood swings and feelings of depression.

Coping

Coping with depression symptoms that accompany perimenopause or menopause often requires a systemic approach. And like many other recommendations for depression or menopause, lifestyle modifications can make a significant difference in your quality of life.

Daily exercise, socializing with friends and family, meditation, mindfulness, and participating in activities that were enjoyable before depressive episodes started are just a few ways to cope with symptoms related to depression.

Reducing or eliminating alcohol, smoking, or other substances can help with certain symptoms of menopause. Also, taking extra care to follow a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean protein, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats may help with symptom management.