

Menopausal Health: Exploratory Factor Analysis of Symptom Severity Experience

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(Abstract)

Menopausal health among women is an important health issue. With the epidemiological changes produced by the demographic transition women spend as much time in peri or post menopausal period as in the reproductive period. Menopausal women are increasingly availing health facilities and demanding the modern services. In the West, studies of midlife transition among women have led to critique of bio-medical paradigm and rejection of disease model of midlife transition. In this context, the importance of exploring “experiencing severity as a subjective fact” cannot be overestimated. This study focuses on the community of menopausal women (CMW) in the age group of 40-65 and covers premenopausal, perimenopausal, as well as postmenopausal women. Purposive and convenient sampling, with a combination of snow-ball sampling and sampling of volunteers, was used for data collection. In all 336 questionnaires were distributed in Kanpur city. 284 questionnaires were returned leading to the response rate of 84.6%. 22 of them were not processed due to incomplete answers. Thus analysis is based on 262 questionnaires. Duly adapted scales of symptom severity and perception of health were used. The statistical data were analysed using the technique of exploratory factor analysis. The findings of the study show that CMW’s perceive menopause as a positive and natural event in their course of life that does not require medical management. These perceptions endorse a natural health approach to health. The study upholds the feminists’ model of menopausal health. CMW’s midlife health perceptions do not produce or support the biomedical disease model, i.e., the model of “the age of loss”, and the risk discourse on menopause in any manner. The overall attitude towards women’s menopausal health among CMW was more positive than negative. The CMW’s over-all menopausal health experiences are mediated more by their psychosocial, cultural, and economic environment than biological condition.

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