

Gynecological Problems in Postmenopausal Women: A Hospital-based Study

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To study various gynecological problems in postmenopausal women; to study the awareness of gynecological problems in postmenopausal women.

Materials and methods: It was a cross-sectional study carried out in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, NKP Salve Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Center, Lata Mangeshkar Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India, from August 2015 to July 2016. The study population comprised all postmenopausal women attending the gynecological outpatient department and those admitted in the gynecological ward. The total number of postmenopausal women included in the study was 200. For the awareness of gynecological problems among postmenopausal women, a structured pretested questionnaire was used.

Results: The mean age at menopause was 45 to 49 years. The most common gynecological problem was postmenopausal bleeding (45%), followed by pelvic organ prolapse (41.50%), frequent micturition (10%), white discharge (9%), burning micturition (8.50%), stress incontinence (4%), and lump in the abdomen (3.50%). Out of the total women of postmenopausal bleeding, 86% were benign and 14% were malignant. In our study, with the women with postmenopausal bleeding, cervical cancer was the most common malignancy (10%).

Conclusion: The most common gynecological problem was postmenopausal bleeding (45%) followed by pelvic organ prolapse (41.50%). The commonest symptom of underlying malignancy was postmenopausal bleeding and the commonest malignancy in our study in the women with the symptom of postmenopausal bleeding was cervical cancer (10%).

Keywords: Gynecological problems, Malignancy, Postmenopausal women.

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INTRODUCTION

The menopause is a word taken from the Greek word “meno” which means month, and “pause” which means cessation. It is a critical period of human life during which time critical body changes take place.¹

Menopause is defined as the cessation of menses for a time of 12 months or a period equivalent to previous three menstrual cycles or as a time of cessation of ovarian function, which results in permanent amenorrhea.² In 1981, the concept of menopause got its importance when a report of the World Health Organization Scientific Group, based on its meeting on Research on the Menopause, which was held in Geneva during December 1980, said that there were virtually no data on the age distribution of menopause and there was no information on its sociocultural significance in the developing countries.³ Today, 40% of a woman's life is spent in postmenopausal era due to increasing life expectancy.⁴

Pelvic organ prolapse, urinary incontinence, genital infections, and genital malignancies are various gynecological problems in postmenopausal women.⁴ The average age of menopause is around 48 years and can strike Indian women as early as 30 to 35 years.⁵ Due to various prevalent problems in postmenopausal life and lack of awareness among menopausal women about this problem, we aimed to study the problems that are common in the postmenopausal women and awareness about this problem and the malignancies in these women.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To study various gynecological problems among postmenopausal women.
- To study the awareness about gynecological problems in postmenopausal women.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was a cross-sectional one carried out in a tertiary care center, Lata Mangeshkar Hospital, Nagpur,

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Maharashtra, India after taking approval from the Ethical Committee.

The study was conducted from August 2015 to July 2016 in 200 postmenopausal women who had been admitted in the gynecological ward for various problems and those who attended the outpatient department. A detailed history and clinical examination was performed in each case followed by routine investigations like hemoglobin, urine examination, random blood sugar, blood group, electrocardiogram, chest X-ray, and ultrasonography of pelvis. Endocervical curettage, endometrial curettage, cervical biopsy, and CA 125 were done in indicated cases.

Inclusion Criteria

All postmenopausal women who had been admitted in the gynecological ward and those who attended the outpatient department for various gynecological problems during the study period.

Exclusion Criteria

Women who refused to participate in the study.

RESULTS

Out of 200 postmenopausal women, maximum women, 55 (27.50%), were in the age-group of 50 to 54 years (Table 1).

Out of 200 postmenopausal women, maximum women had menopause at the age of 45 to 49 years (Table 2 and Graph 1).

Majority of women had postmenopausal bleeding (45%) as most common gynecological problem followed by uterine prolapse (41.50%), and other gynecological problems were frequent micturition (10%), white discharge (9%), burning micturition (8.50%), stress incontinence (4%), and lump in the abdomen (3.5%) (Table 3).

Out of 200 postmenopausal women, 114 (57%) had come within 5 years of menopause (Table 4).

Awareness was present in only 18 (9%) out of 200 postmenopausal women about various gynecological problems (Table 5).

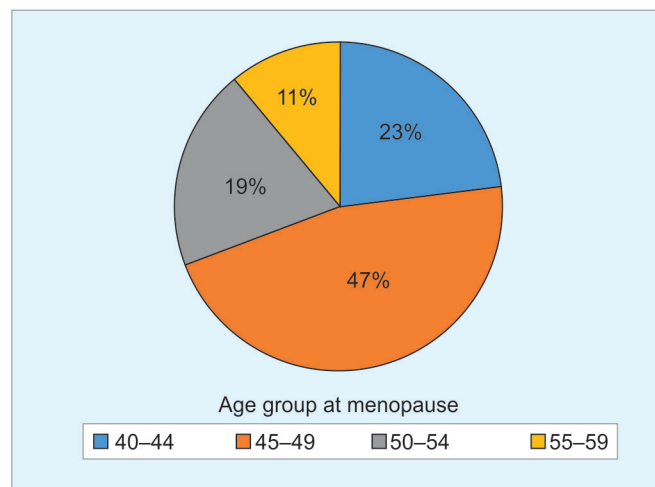
Table 1: Age group wise distribution of postmenopausal women

Age group (years)	No. of women	Percentage
40–44	3	1.50
45–49	45	22.50
50–54	55	27.50
55–59	24	12.00
60–64	28	14.00
65–69	30	15.00
70–75	15	7.50
Total	200	100.00

Out of 90 women with postmenopausal bleeding, 77 (86%) were of benign cause and 13 (14%) were malignant cause (Table 6).

Table 2: Distribution of women according to age of menopause

Age group (years)	No. of women	Percentage
40–44	46	23.00
45–49	93	47.00
50–54	39	19.00
55–59	22	11.00
Total	200	100.00



Graph 1: Distribution of women according to age of menopause

Table 3: Distribution of gynecological problems

Gynecological problems	No. of women
Postmenopausal bleeding	90 (45%)
Uterine prolapse	83 (41.50%)
Frequent micturition	20 (10%)
White discharge	18 (9%)
Burning micturition	17 (8.50%)
Stress incontinence	8 (4%)
Lump in abdomen	7 (3.50%)

Table 4: Distribution of the women according to duration of the menopause

Duration of menopause (years)	No. of women with postmenopausal symptoms
1–5	114 (57%)
6–10	22 (11%)
11–15	40 (20%)
16–20	18 (9%)
21–25	6 (3%)

Table 5: Distribution of women according to the awareness about various gynecological problems

Awareness	No. of women
Present	18 (9%)
Absent	182 (91%)
Total	200 (100%)

Table 6: Distribution of various gynecological disorders in postmenopausal women

<i>Diagnosis</i>			<i>No. of women</i>
Postmenopausal bleeding	Benign	Atrophic endometrium	52
		Fibroid	13
		Polyp	7
		CIN	5
Postmenopausal bleeding	Malignant	Ca cervix	9
		Ca endometrium	3
		Leiomyosarcoma	1
Pelvic organ prolapse			83
Urinary problems	UTI		17
		Urge incontinence	20
		Stress incontinence	8
Ca ovary	7		
Ca vagina	1		

CIN: Cervical intraepithelial neoplasia; UTI: Urinary tract infection

DISCUSSION

In the present study, the age range was 40 to 75 years and majority were between 50 and 54 years (Table 7).

Age at menopause: It was observed that maximum number of women, 93 women (47%), had menopause between 45 and 49 years.

The duration of the menopause was considered as the time interval between the onset of menopause and the onset of the postmenopausal problems. In the maximum number of women, the duration of the menopause was between 1 and 5 years.

Postmenopausal bleeding is the warning sign for gynecological malignancies; 86% of cases with postmenopausal women had benign cause and 14% had malignant cause. Thus, postmenopausal bleeding warrants the urgency of emergent further evaluation of the case. In our study, in women with postmenopausal bleeding, carcinoma of the cervix was the commonest malignancy found.

According to the study by Lee et al,¹¹ 25.7% of patients with postmenopausal bleeding had malignant cause and the commonest malignancy was the cervical cancer.

In the study done by Singh and Arora,⁸ 65% of women with postmenopausal bleeding had malignant cause and the most common malignancy was cervical cancer.

In our study, 14% women with postmenopausal bleeding had malignancy and even in our study, the most common malignancy was cervical malignancy (Table 8).

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the most common gynecological problem in postmenopausal women was postmenopausal bleeding (45%), followed by uterine prolapse (41.50%), and other gynecological problems were frequent micturition (10%),

Table 7: Comparison of the age of presentation with other studies

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Age range (years)</i>
Lidor et al ⁶	226	40–81
Gredmark et al ⁷	457	50–80
Singh and Arora ⁸	100	40–75
Opmeer et al ⁹	540	37–91
Bharani and Phatak ¹⁰	25	52–65
Present study	200	40–75

Table 8: Comparison of benign and malignant cause of postmenopausal bleeding with other studies

<i>Study (population)</i>	<i>Benign (%)</i>	<i>Malignant (%)</i>	<i>Most common cancer</i>
Lee et al (163) ¹¹	74.3	25.7	Cervical cancer
Singh and Arora (100) ⁸	35	65	Cervical cancer
Our study (200)	86	14	Cervical cancer

white discharge (9%), burning micturition (8.50%), stress incontinence (4%), and lump in the abdomen (3.5%).

In our study, in women with postmenopausal bleeding, 14% had malignant cause and the most common malignancy was cervical malignancy.

In our study, only 18 (9%) postmenopausal women had awareness about gynecological problems.

RECOMMENDATION

To prevent such problems, emphasis should be given more to create awareness about gynecological problems. Awareness can be created by displaying posters, giving health education to local paramedical people so that they refer these women to the specialist earlier. Postmenopausal bleeding should not be neglected. Screening should be done of all sexually active women of 21 years of age and above for cervical cancer by opportunistic screening methods like Pap smear.

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