

RISK FACTORS AND THEIR ROLE IN MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOM EXPRESSION

Milena Zlatanović,^{1,2} Ardea Milidrag,² Milena Despotović,² Nikola Savić,^{2,3} Ljiljana Antić,⁴

¹*The Academy of Applied Preschool Teaching and Health Studies Kruševac, Department of Medical Studies, Čuprija, Serbia*

²*University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Kragujevac, Serbia*

³*Singidunum University, Faculty of Business Valjevo, Department of Healthcare, Valjevo, Serbia*

⁴*High School of Sports and Health, Belgrade, Serbia*

DOI: 10.5937/BatutPHCO24209Z

Background: Menopause is a natural biological process with numerous physical and emotional symptoms that can be reduced by changing certain lifestyle habits.

Methods and Objectives: The research was conducted as a cross-sectional study and 94 women over 40 years participated. The survey was conducted online from May 20, 2024, to July 10, 2024, and a sociodemographic questionnaire was used as an instrument, while menopause symptoms were assessed using the Menopause Rating Scale (MRS). The survey was anonymous with respect to all ethical norms, and the respondents gave their consent to participate in the research.

Results: Our research results show that most respondents (52%), were older than 50 years. Of these, 47% had a menopause symptom score >17, indicating severe symptoms. Among women under 50 years, 48%, had a score from 0 to 4 (30%), indicating no symptoms. Perimenopausal respondents with cycles had the highest percentage (34%) without complaints, while 50% of menopausal women had some symptoms. Both groups had equal percentages of mild and moderate symptoms. Among smokers and non-smokers under 50, a score >17 was present in about one third, similar to those without symptoms. For women over 50, the highest percentages were with severe symptoms (56% and 43%). Women under 50 who are physically active show 33% free of complaints, compared to only 5% for those over 50. Severe symptoms are most prevalent in women over 50, at 60%. Regarding diet, 47% and 48% of women in both age categories consume protective foods, but 32% of them have no symptoms, while 47% have severe symptoms. In regard to chronic diseases, 59% of older respondents have a score > 17, while it is present in 41% of younger respondents. Among women without chronic diseases, mild and moderate symptoms are present in the highest percentages of 30% and 28%.

Conclusions: From the results of the research, we can conclude that proper nutrition, regular physical activity and bad lifestyle habits have a significant impact on the appearance and worsening of menopause symptoms, so educating women about healthy lifestyles is very important.

Keywords: menopause, symptoms, nutrition, physical activity, habits