

Symptoms and quality of life in women of advanced age as assessed with the mrs scale.

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CONTEXT: Menopausal symptoms are drastically dependent on hypoestrogenism but their duration is unclear. Observational studies describe that the number of years since menopause is a powerful modulator but their magnitude at more advanced age has not been adequately explored. Quality of life may be influenced as a consequence.

OBJECTIVE: To assess the menopausal symptoms status in a cohort of postmenopausal women who have passed a minimum of 10 years since menopause. The potential impact of age, type of menopause, number of deliveries and number of years since menopause were investigated too.

METHODS: Cross-sectional study in which postmenopausal women were evaluated with the Menopause Rating Scale. Participants were inhabitants of Valencia, a Mediterranean city in Spain.

PATIENTS: Two hundred and thirty three postmenopausal women between 46-88 years.

INTERVENTION: Administration of the questionnaire with collection of personal and gynaecological data.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURE: The MRS is composed of eleven items and three domains: Somatic (hot flushes, heart discomfort, sleep disorders and muscle and joint discomfort); Psychological (depressive mood, irritability, anxiety, physical and mental fatigue) and Urogenital (sexual problems, bladder complaints and vaginal dryness). The intensities are graded on a Likert scale of 0 (absent) to 4 (severe).

RESULTS: The average age of the total sample was 66.02 ± 6.85 years (mean \pm SD), and the average number of years since menopause was 19.77 ± 6.40 . The mean number of deliveries was 2.05 ± 1.22 . A 28.3% of the sample (n=66) had a surgical menopause. The average of total MRS score was 13.52 ± 6.88 . The urogenital domain was highest (5.88 ± 2.76) and the somatic domain was lowest (2.80 ± 2.33). A 31.80% (n=74) of the women suffered sexual problems of a serious nature (?3). Next, a 28.1% (n=66) of the sample presented vaginal dryness between severe (3 points) and very serious (4 points). The hot flushes and cardiac discomfort (palpitations, tachycardia...) were present (from mild to severe) in part of the sample (36.5% and 41.2%, respectively). Thirteen women suffered hot flushes with serious intensity (?3), and five women presented serious cardiac symptoms (?3). No relationship was detected between MRS score and age (p=.646), years since menopause (p=.514) or number of deliveries (p=.796).

CONCLUSIONS: There is agreement between the most affected domain and the symptom suffered with greater intensity, corresponding to sexual problems.