

PSYCHOSOCIAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT NEEDS OF MARRIED WOMEN GOING THROUGH THE POSTMENOPAUSAL STAGE IN THE ATHAGAMA MOH AREA IN KALUTARA

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Menopause is a period in the life of women who have experienced cessation of menstruation for one year or more. It can be described as a new phase in their life cycle, characterized by several symptoms due to changed hormonal activity resulting in physiological, psychological and behavioral changes. Therefore, women at this stage need to make suitable adjustments that will enable them cope with the new challenges and achieve their physiological and psychosocial needs successfully. This study was carried out with the aim of finding the psychosocial and physiological adjustment needs of postmenopausal married women in the Athagama MOH area in the Kalutara District.

A quantitative approach and a descriptive design was used on a target population of married menopausal women between 48 to 55 years excluding women with mental illness, cancer patients and women who have undergone major surgeries such as hysterectomy. The data was collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire consisting of four sections including demographic characteristics, postmenopausal symptoms, physiological needs and psychosocial needs of participants. Data obtained was analyzed using the SPSS software.

Majority of the respondents were found to be unemployed married women in the age of 51 – 55 years with primary education. Most common menopausal symptoms reported in the study are joint pain (80%), back pain (75.5%), hot flushes, (55.5%), muscle pain (50.5%), headache (44.5%) and fatigue (40.5%). Among the psychological needs found, the majority of respondents (95%) are in the need of controlling their anger, 93 % in need of cultivating pleasant dispositions, and 92% in need of obtaining reassurance from fear and worries. In addition, psychological needs such as regaining self-esteem and life satisfaction needed for attending social functions with spouse, having someone to talk to were also found to have a higher percentage. According to the data obtained, the highest important physiological health needs of menopausal women were found to be reduction of joint pain (96%) and back pain (93%) and to have better sleep (81%). In addition, 78.5 % women wanted to avoid fatigue and work normally and 70% of them needed to be free of heat intolerance.

Findings of this study showed that the most pressing psychosocial needs are to have a relaxed mind, to cultivate patience and keep anger at bay, to cultivate pleasant dispositions, to obtain reassurance from fear and worries, to regain self-

esteem and life satisfaction, to attend social functions with spouse, to have someone to talk to and to take a break from their daily routines. Most important physiological health needs of menopausal women included the need to reduce joint and back pain, sleep soundly, avoid fatigue, work normally and be free from heat intolerance. Most common menopausal symptoms reported are joint pain, back pain, hot flushes and muscle pain.

Therefore, individual and group counselling can be recommended for both menopausal women and their husbands for a better understanding that menopause is a natural phenomenon and that there are ways and means of coping with it.

Keywords: Physiological adjustment needs, Psychological adjustment needs, Menopause

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