

## **Menopausal symptoms and Quality of Life among indigenous menopausal women of Borneo Island.**

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The objectives of the present study were to document the common menopausal symptoms and their effect on quality of life among the indigenous menopausal women of Borneo Island using the Bahasa Malaysia version of the menopause-specific quality of life questionnaire (MENQOL). Menopause-related complaints were assessed for 276 women aged 40-65 years during their menopausal transition (premenopausal and perimenopausal) or after menopause (postmenopause) using MENQOL. The Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test and Pearson correlation were used for statistical analysis.

Th results show that the mean age at menopause was  $50.78 \pm 2.47$  years (range 47.3 – 58.2 years). The most common symptoms reported were in the physical domains; muscle and joint ache (82.6 %), lack of energy (77.5%) and low backache (77.2%). The typical menopausal symptoms of hot flushes, night sweats, sweating and vaginal dryness were experienced by less than 50% of the women studied.

Mean scores of perimenopausal women were significantly higher for vasomotor, psychological and physical symptoms ( $2.96 \pm 1.89$ ;  $2.65 \pm 1.22$ ;  $2.78 \pm 1.23$ ) while postmenopausal women had higher sexual symptoms ( $2.94 \pm 1.84$ ). The perimenopausal women had the highest scores in vasomotor domains while postmenopausal women had the highest scores in sexual domains ( $2.96 \pm 1.89$  ;  $2.94 \pm 1.84$ ).

There was a significant difference in mean scores in both the peri- and postmenopausal groups of women in the vasomotor domains ( $p < 0.001$ ) and between the post and pre/perimenopausal women however no significant difference in mean scores of the four domains among premenopausal women.

In conclusion MENQOL is a good self-administered tool in the assessment of climacteric complaints, with convenient application. The symptoms experienced by menopausal women indigenous to Borneo corresponds to other studies of Asian women however the prevalence of typical and classical menopausal symptoms was lower than that reported in Caucasian women. Reported reduction in quality of life was most strongly associated with the presence of vasomotor symptoms and was most marked in perimenopausal women followed by post menopausal women.

**Keywords:** Menopausal symptoms; Menopause-Specific Quality of Life questionnaire; indigenous women; Borneo Island.