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Assessment of menopausal symptoms using modified Menopause Rating Scale (MRS) among middle age women in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

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Abstract

Background: Menopausal symptoms can be assessed by several tools, and can be influenced by various socio-demographic factors.

Objectives: To determine the commonly reported menopausal symptoms among Sarawakian women using a modified Menopause Rating Scale (MRS).

Methods: By using modified MRS questionnaire, 356 Sarawakian women aged 40-65 years were interviewed to document 11 symptoms (divided into somatic, psychological and urogenital domain) commonly associated with menopause.

Results: The mean age of menopause was 51.3 years (range 47 - 56 years). The most prevalent symptoms reported were joint and muscular discomfort (80.1%); physical and mental exhaustion (67.1%); and sleeping problems (52.2%). Followed by symptoms of hot flushes and sweating (41.6%); irritability (37.9%); dryness of vagina (37.9%); anxiety (36.5%); depressive mood (32.6%). Other complaints noted were sexual problem (30.9%); bladder problem (13.8%) and heart discomfort (18.3%). Perimenopausal women (n = 141) experienced higher prevalence of somatic and psychological symptoms compared to premenopausal (n = 82) and postmenopausal (n = 133) women. However urogenital symptoms mostly occur in the postmenopausal group of women.

Conclusions: The prevalence of menopausal symptoms using modified MRS in this study correspond to other studies on Asian women however the prevalence of classical menopausal symptoms of hot flushes, sweating was lower compared to studies on Caucasian women.

Background

Menopause which is defined as complete cessation of menstruation for twelve months or more is a normal physiological change experienced by middle age women. Some of menopausal symptoms experienced by these women can be severe enough to affect their normal daily activities. Unfortunately majority of these women are not aware of the changes brought about by menopause [1-4]. These symptoms are directly resulted from depletion of estrogen level as women approaches menopausal stage and some of these women begin to experience these menopausal symptoms early in the perimenopausal phase. The common climacteric

symptoms experienced by them can be grouped into: vasomotor, physical, psychological or sexual complaints. It was also noted in some postmenopausal women with long term estrogen deficiency, changes to the cardiovascular or bone which leads to osteoporosis has been established. It is well documented that menopausal symptoms experienced by women affect their quality of life [5-7]. Many published reports show variations in menopausal symptoms between Asian and Caucasian women, Asian women suffer lesser of somatic and psychological symptoms when compared to their western counterparts [8-11].

Studies shown that perimenopausal and postmenopausal women have more menopausal complaints compared to premenopausal women. They were noted to complain significantly more of vasomotor, sexual and

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