



## **Changing attitudes of middle aged women towards menopause**

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### **Abstract**

Ageing is a series of transition from one set of social roles to another, which is structured by social system rather than biological one; Attitudes toward aging are influenced by expected life span, economic conditions, social expectations, media, arts, and literature of the time. Ageist attitudes may be excessively positive or negative, depending on one's tendency to stereotype individuals based on their age. Although it seems reasonable to suggest that most women experience significant changes during their middle age having impact on their health, family and household. The purpose of the study is to understand the changing attitudes of middle aged women towards their health (i.e. menopausal stage). Menopause is one of the stages which occur in woman's life leading her to face various health, social, economic and family issues. Since this paper is based on secondary data. The paper tries to explore how women take menopause as one of their physiological as well as psychological change occurring among them with respect to their age and at the same time to understand attitude of middle aged women towards menopause.

**Keywords:** ageing, women, health attitude, social system, menopause

### **Introduction**

A man's life is usually divided into five stages namely infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age. Of these stages an individual has to adjust himself in different situations and problems. The boundary between middle age and old age cannot be clearly defined as it does not have the same meaning in all societies. People are considered elderly because of certain changes in their activities or social roles. The ageing process is of course a biological reality which has its own dynamics, largely beyond human control.

Health is a gender issue because power relations determine the concept of health in most societies. In many countries as well as in India, despite great progress in health facilities, women's health remains a neglected area. This is because in a patriarchal society women's health and nutrition is always given less importance than that of men. In the household girls and women get a lesser share in the distribution of health goods and services generally but in distribution of labor they get major share of responsibilities. They are generally undernourished and suffer from poor health but these facts are quite often ignored. As long as a woman produces children and takes care of them, she is considered fit. Since this is considered her main role, most health schemes are focused on pregnant and lactating mothers. The health of women of all other categories is not given any importance. 'Health' is perceived as a normal state of 'delivering the goods' by the woman, not her actual wellbeing. Women's health covers mortality, morbidity, nutritional status and re-productive health. Linked to these is environmental degradation. Violence and occupational hazards, all of which have implications for women's health. Attitudes refer to general evaluations individuals have regarding people (including you), places, objects, and issues. Attitudes can be assessed in many ways and are accorded special status because of their presumed influence

on people's choices and actions (e.g., attitude change mediates the impact of belief change on behavior change). That is, all else being equal, when making choices people will decide to buy the product they like the most, attend the university they evaluated most favorably, and vote for the candidate they approve of most strongly. Attitudes are sometimes changed by relatively low thought mechanisms (e.g., conditioning), although at other times they are changed with a great deal of thinking (e.g., role playing). Sometimes the thinking is relatively objective and sometimes it is biased by variables such as using an attractive source or putting people in a good mood sometimes have a positive effect on persuasion and sometimes the effect is negative. To understand the complexities, contemporary multi process theories of persuasion were developed.

We often use attitudes as the tie breaker between two equally qualified candidates. According to Fishbein and Ajzen an attitude is "a learned precise position to respond in a consistently unfavorable manner with respect to give object. Thurston defined as "attitude is the intensity of positive or negative effect for or against a psychological. According to the advanced learner's dictionary of current English, "Attitude is defined as way of looking, thinking, and feeling or behaving. "Therefore an attitude is defined as one's feeling or mood towards things, circumstances and people. Attitudes of individuals affect their appraisals, their perception and their judgment and behavior in relevant situations both experimental and natural Attitude provides a frame of reference that helps us structure and make object. "GW all port proposed that "an attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon individual's response to all object and situations with which it is related." A positive attitude is therefore the inclination to

generally be in an optimistic, hopeful state of mind. Generally we divided life attitude in two categories i.e. positive and negative. An example of a negative attitude towards life is being pessimistic that things will never turn out well where as a positive attitude is characterized by high esteem, high self confidence, trustful and being optimistic. Often the causes of “developing negative attitude towards life” are more mental than physical. A bad relationship, poor self image, a history of abuse, stress, frustration and many other factors can change over all attitudes towards life which may directly impact person’s overall performance. Thus elderly people are at greater risk to develop negative attitude. Personal meaning is defined as having a purpose in life, having a sense of direction, a sense of order and a reason for existence, a clear sense of personal identity, and a greater social consciousness. Personal choice/irresponsibility have been shown to be related to a number of measures of psychological, physical, and mental well-being, and are a major source for bolstering self-esteem, life satisfaction, and personal growth in the face of disability and losses that often accompany advancing age.

Attitude toward menopause has been studied almost exclusively from a woman’s perspective without reference to the marital context. Neugarten, Wood Krains and Loomis (1963) [2]. In our research tells that age differences in attitude towards menopause with younger women younger women expressing more negative attitudes towards menopause than older woman. Older woman do not express the same attitudes or concerns about menopause and its developmental significance at midlife. Menopause attitude means evaluative opinions, communication and mental changes about menopause, and includes expressed feelings and thought about certain matters and mental attitudes as readiness to respond to certain situations or objects. Menopause knowledge implies the degree of understanding changes in the body as transition from a potentially reproductive a non-reproductive state, and is an assessment scale that measures knowledge toward child-bearing potential, menopausal age, ovarian hormone levels, estrogen treatment effect and others using menopause knowledge. Menopause symptom is defined when menstrual bleeding was not been observed for a full 12 months without a specific cause such as pregnancy or breast feeding according to the standards of the world health organization. (WTO) of the world health organization (WHO).

### Concept of Menopause

Menopause is a term as medical concept which is clearly states that it is one of the health transitions among where they are unable to perform reproductive activities. Sociologists, health experts, social scientists have provided their own views about menopause. In clear sense, menopause is that a phase where women undergo physical and psychological transformation and half are done with their main familial responsibilities. It’s a time where now women seek for fulfillment of their own desires and interests which they had left back at an very early age. in simple meaning, menopause denotes cessation of reproductive potentiality among women as they undergo hormonal changes and experience certain physiological as well as psychological changes and no longer are able to reproduce children and subjected to religious activities along with the status transformation as now they are entering into aging.

### Review of Literature

World Health Organization (1996) [5], states that menopause marks the beginning of old age for women. Menopause occurs among women between 45 and 55 years of age resulting in certain physiological changes such as ending of ovarian functions and beginning of ageing process. Menopause have brought some negative attitude towards woman as they are no longer to undertake reproductive activities which have decreased woman’s utility in family as well as society itself.

Mc. Quaide (1996) [6] pointed out that women belonging to the age group of 40-60 require desired changes in their lives. These women possess the ability to forget their past experiences and focus on their present, they look for religious activities to achieve mental and spiritual approval, spend time with friends and relatives, intense communication and activities of their own interest keep them updated with healthy and quality life because it’s time for them to focus on themselves as they have fulfilled their familial duties and now focusing on their own personal augmentation. Further, in the year 1998 Mc. Quaide in his another study have marked out the differences between middle adulthood and late adulthood where women’s life style, socio-economic and family living including sexual life, food practices, and religious activities undergo changes because this is that phase where women’s reproductive activities are bunched ensuing menopause.

Lindlaw (1997) [7] in her study saw the sights that women can have babies even after menopause. It is possible through medical technology i.e. by vitro fertilization has made it possible for menopausal women. In connection to this, some of women have undergone vitro fertilization because their daughters were unable to conceive and have babies. This is a phase to describe about potentiality of woman in giving birth to the babies of their daughters in the sense it is nothing but an affection of parents towards their daughters.

Shah Rashmi (1999) [8] in her study on “Menopausal Health” states that menopausal experiences differ among women across cultures. Their views about menopause are either positive or negative depending upon health condition and how they take it or manage; so also ready to accept or face health challenges. Many physicians have advised that it is very important to bring awareness among women regarding menopause which can be possible through health publications in newspapers, articles, magazines, journals and books. Further, they also stated that there should be menopausal clinics be established at public and private hospitals where these health organizations should offer health packages to menopausal which includes counseling, assessment of cardiac health, bone density measurement, evaluation of biochemical parameters and treatment options which help middle age women for menopause and come out with remedial solutions

Mansfield *et al.*, (2004) [4]. have observed that women who feel that they are entering into menopause and are losing reproductive stability notice physiological changes in them such as irregular periods, dryness in skin, weight gain etc. This is a sign of pre-menopause. In connection to this, Mc Elmurry and Huddleston (1991) [10], Im Melvis and Park (1999) [11], Mansfield *et al* (2004) [9] have explored women who undergoes menopause have completely lost their menses and are not able to perform any of the reproductive functions which is in clear sense indicate that they have closure of periods for 12 months and have not diagnosed

approximately for two years immediately after their periods cessation. This stage is called as post-menopause.

### Objectives

- To identify the life style, desires and priorities of middle age women who are undergoing menopausal transition.
- To understand the relationship between age and menopausal status of middle aged women

### Results

Menopausal women have reported that most positive attitudes towards menopause, which may indicate that once woman, have gone through menopause they find to be less troubling than they anticipated in earlier life. Negative attitudes towards menopause were related to psychological symptoms, a study reveals that these women may be at higher risk for a difficult midlife transition. Their attitudes towards menopause and ageing tended to be more positive neutral as opposed to negative. Age was positively related to menopausal attitude such that older women reported a more positive attitude.

### Conclusion

Menopause is one of the health changes which occurs among women which we depict the concept of “young old age” i.e. general term we state it as those women who are undergoing menopause or have entered into “old age” taking as factor as specific phenomenon.

Therefore middle aged women (35-55) are facing menopause as one of the biological change leading impact on their physiological as well as psychological health. In connection to their factor such as social, political, economical health as well as household has deep rooted connection with the menopausal status of middle aged women, because these women are facing new challenges as well as situation along with their health status, hence forth it is very important to note that food habits, dietary habits, regular exercise, routine activities, should be followed correctly because women experience menopausal transition, middle aged women need adequate health care as well as their health gets dependent on what kind of food they consume.

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