



INVESTIGATION OF THE PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES ASSOCIATED WITH MENOPAUSE AMONG WOMEN IN THE GAMPAHA DISTRICT

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Menopause is a significant stage in a woman's life, marking the end of her reproductive years and the cessation of monthly menstrual cycles. It generally occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, with natural menopause defined as 12 consecutive months without menstruation. Hormonal changes associated with menopause can affect physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being. The objective of this study was to investigate the prevalence of physical, emotional, and cognitive changes associated with the onset of menopause by recruiting a sample from the Gampaha District. Data were collected using a cross-sectional, self-reported, closed-ended questionnaire. One hundred and five postmenopausal individuals were randomly recruited, and their physical, emotional, and cognitive health parameters were assessed. Physical health parameters included high blood pressure, heart disease, osteoporosis, constipation, urinary tract infections, and vasomotor symptoms such as hot flushes and night sweats. Psychological and cognitive parameters were evaluated based on sleep disturbances, anger levels, mood states, feelings of sadness, and difficulty concentrating. The results show that 67.6% developed high blood pressure, 40% developed heart disease, and 72.4% developed these changes after menopause. In terms of body composition, 56.2% gained weight and 54.3% gained abdominal fat. Among 61 individuals diagnosed with osteoporosis, 65.6% developed the condition after menopause. Regarding vasomotor symptoms, 60.6% of 104 individuals experienced hot flushes and night sweats, 60.6% developed constipation, and 51.9% experienced urinary tract infections after menopause. Significant prevalence of physical, psychological, and cognitive health changes was observed among individuals after menopause, indicating that hormonal changes significantly impact women's overall health. Specifically, 83.6% experienced sleep disturbances, 87.6% became easily angered, 76.2% experienced a low mood in previously enjoyed activities, 76.1% frequently felt sadness, and 86.6% reported difficulty concentrating. This study concludes that hormonal changes during menopause lead to a high prevalence of physical, psychological, and cognitive changes in most women. Awareness of these changes, along with maintaining healthy dietary, physical, and mental behaviours, may help women adapt more effectively.

Keywords: high blood pressure, hormonal changes, menopause, osteoporosis

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INTRODUCTION

Menopause is a significant stage in a woman's life, marking the end of her reproductive years and the cessation of monthly menstruation. It generally occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, with natural menopause defined as 12 consecutive months without menstruation. Postmenopausal syndrome is a common condition among women aged 45 and above, characterised by hot flushes, night sweats, and various physical and mental changes. Hormonal alterations associated with the end of menstrual cycles can impact physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being. The objective of this study is to investigate the prevalence of physical, emotional, and cognitive changes associated with the onset of menopause by recruiting a sample from the Gampaha District.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research method was employed in this study. Data were collected using a cross-sectional, self-reported, closed-ended questionnaire. One hundred and five postmenopausal individuals were randomly recruited from the Gampaha district community. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, through which the data were collected. It assessed various physical health parameters, including cardiovascular conditions, osteoporosis, gastrointestinal disorders, urinary tract infections, and vasomotor symptoms such as hot flushes and night sweats associated with the onset of menopause. Emotional and cognitive parameters were evaluated using criteria for sleep disturbances, anger levels, mood states, feelings of sadness, and difficulty concentrating during daily activities. These parameters were selected based on common changes observed during the postmenopausal period.

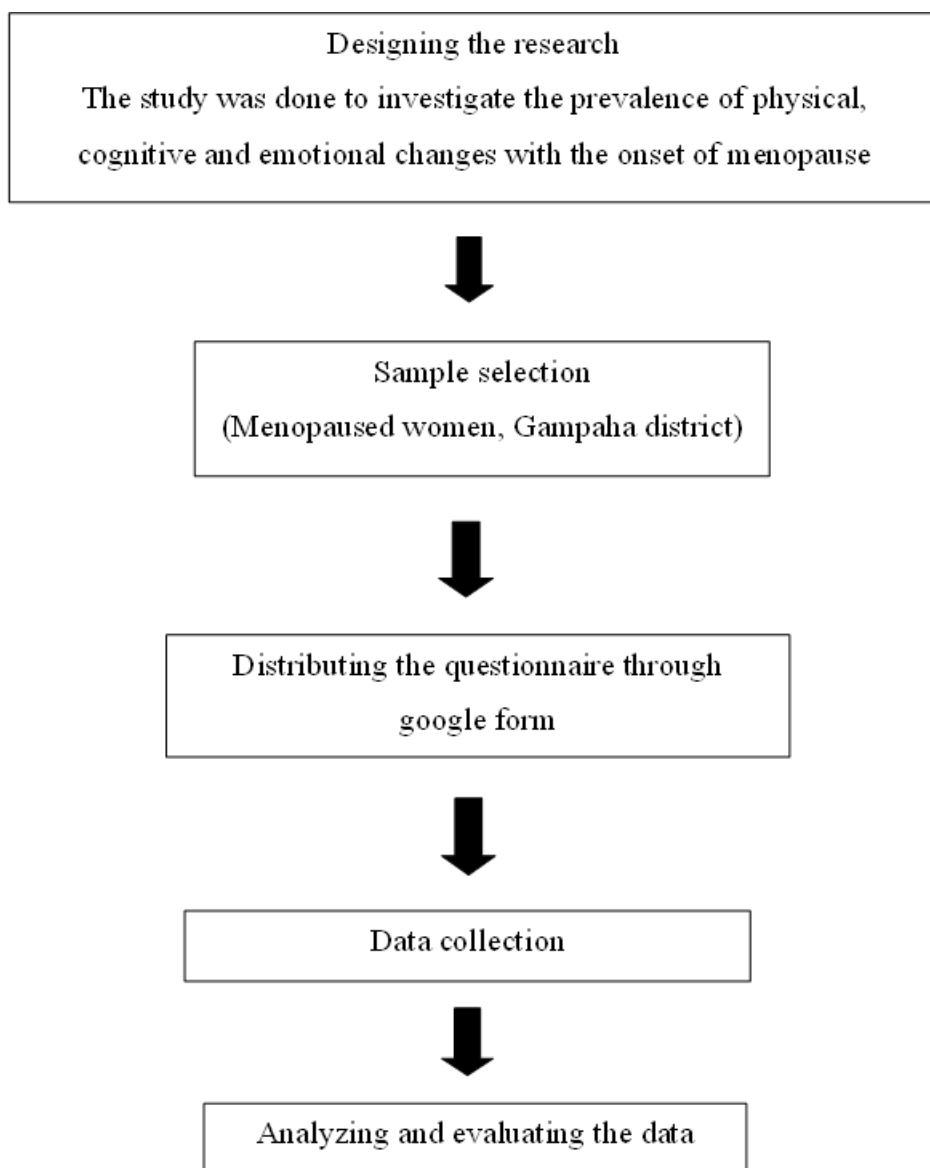


Figure 1: Methodology of the study



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results were analyzed based on two criteria: the prevalence of physical health parameters and the prevalence of psychological and cognitive health parameters. The prevalence of physical health parameters was calculated as the percentage of individuals who developed a specific parameter compared to those who did not. Similarly, the prevalence of psychological and cognitive health parameters was assessed as the percentage of individuals exhibiting a higher or moderate level of a given parameter compared to those who did not exhibit it.

1. Prevalence of the physical health parameters

A significant proportion of individuals exhibited cardiovascular health issues. Out of 105 individuals, 67.6% developed high blood pressure, 40% developed heart disease, and 72.4% of them developed these issues after the onset of menopause. Changes in body composition were observed: 56.2% of individuals gained weight after menopause, and 54.3% gained abdominal fat. Among 61 individuals diagnosed with osteoporosis, 65.6% developed the condition after menopause. Regarding vasomotor symptoms, 60.6% of 104 individuals experienced hot flushes and night sweats. Additionally, 60.6% developed constipation, and 51.9% experienced urinary tract infections after menopause.

Physical changes and Vasomotor symptoms	Number of respondents	Percentage of those who present that change with the onset of menopause	Percentage of those who do not present that change with the onset of menopause
High blood pressure/ heart diseases	105	72.4%	27.6%
Weight gain	105	56.2%	43.8%
Belly fat	105	54.3%	45.7%
Osteoporosis	61	65.6%	34.4%
Hot flushes and night sweats	104	60.6%	39.4%
Constipation	104	60.6%	39.4%
Urinary infections	104	51.9%	48.1%

Figure 2: Prevalence of physical health parameters

2. Prevalence of the psychological and cognitive health parameters



Out of 105 respondents, 83.6% reported experiencing sleep disturbances, with 42.3% facing them regularly and 41.3% reporting a moderate level of disturbance after menopause. 87.6% indicated that they become easily angered, with 49.5% experiencing a high level of anger and 38.1% showing a moderate level of irritability over minor issues. Additionally, 76.2% reported a low mood in activities they previously enjoyed, including 15.2% with a severe low mood and 61% with a moderate level of low mood. 76.1% frequently felt sadness, of whom 19% experienced a high level of sadness and 57.1% a moderate level while engaging in previously enjoyable activities. Furthermore, 86.6% reported difficulty concentrating after menopause. Among them, 27.6% had a high level of concentration difficulty, while 59% experienced a moderate level of difficulty following the onset of menopause.

Psychological and cognitive health parameters	No of respondents	The percentage of those who present that change with the onset of menopause		The percentage of those who do not present that change with the onset of menopause
		Higher level (Always present)	Moderate level (Not always present, but sometimes)	
Sleeping disturbances	105	42.3%	41.3%	16.3%
Quick arousal to angeriness	105	38.1%	49.5%	12.4%
Low mood of previously loved activities	105	15.2%	60%	23.8%
Feeling of sadness	105	19%	57.1%	23.8%
Difficulty in concentration	105	27.6%	59%	13.3%

Figure 3: Prevalence of psychological and cognitive health parameters

This questionnaire with the 105 post-menopausal women shows that there is a significant prevalence of physical, psychological, and cognitive changes with the onset of menopause. This period of life can significantly impact physical, emotional,



and cognitive health due to the changes in the fluctuation of hormones with menopause. It is important to identify the prevalence of these changes to develop effective management strategies.

CONCLUSION

Through this study, it can be concluded that the hormonal change with the menopause will lead to the development of a high prevalence of the above-mentioned physical, emotional, and cognitive changes in most women. It can be suggested that being aware of these changes and maintaining healthy dietary and mental behaviors will help women to face these changes conveniently.

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