



Indian
Menopause Society

WZIMSCON
Udaipur 2024



P♀ISE MAGAZINE

**Mental Health &
Menopause**

WEST ZONE-IMSCON
2024



Indian
Menopause Society

WZIMSCON

Udaipur 2024

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Theme - "Sailing through midlife and beyond"



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Message from President



Dr Anju Soni
President,
Indian Menopause Society, 2024 - 25

Menopause is often perceived solely as a physical transition, but it is also a profound mental and emotional journey that many women navigate silently. As the President of the Indian Menopause Society, I want to highlight the significance of mental health awareness during this phase, shedding light on the often-overlooked emotional impacts of menopause.

Hormonal shifts during menopause can bring about changes in mood, anxiety levels, and even cognitive functions, affecting a woman's overall sense of well-being. The emotional challenges tied to these changes deserve attention, empathy, and accessible support systems. It is essential that we, as a community, encourage open conversations and provide resources for women to manage both their mental and physical health proactively.

With Poise magazine, we aim to break down the stigma around mental health during menopause, empowering women with knowledge, self-care strategies, and the support they deserve. Let us all work together to create a nurturing environment where every woman feels seen, heard, and supported in this journey.



Message from Secretary General



Dr. Bipasa Sen
Secretary General,
Indian Menopause Society, 2024-25

I feel extremely happy to announce the release of 4th Poise in our tenure at the West Zone Conference at Lake City Udaipur. Our 3rd issue of Poise spoke on Musculoskeletal Health. We all know that Physical and Mental Health stand side by side to keep a person 'Fit' in true sense. So, after musculoskeletal health, it is perfect succession of 'Mental Health' at the current issue of Poise to complete the circle. Mental problems are often apparently unsung and overlooked, but always tumultuous in a person's life. Hope the article in this Poise would benefit a large number of people and be blessed by all.



Message from Editor



Shubha Sethia
Editor POISE

**Chairperson Public Awareness Committee and Club 35
Indian Menopause Society**

Menopausal transition with associated hormonal fluctuations along with changes in social environment and role transitions at this stage can bring about a lot of mental health issues like anxiety, irritation, depression, mood swings, brain fog, cognitive decline, sleep issues and affect the quality of life of women.

We are dedicating this issue of POISE to mental health issues in menopause. Learned authors from all over the country have made valuable contribution and suggest pragmatic approaches to navigate this phase of a woman's life and untangle the mental health issues during this phase. Their suggestion will go a long way in making it the most treasured phase of a woman's life and truly make it the "second spring of life." I am highly grateful to Dr Anju Soni, President IMS, Dr Sudha Sharma, Vice president, and Dr Bipasa Sen, Secretary General IMS, for giving us this opportunity. Sincere thanks to Udaipur Menopause Society President Dr Sudha Gandhi and Secretary Dr Nalini Sharma for their continuous support. Last but not least, my thanks to my vibrant and enthusiastic coeditor Dr Smita Goyal for her continuous hard work to make this issue a reality.

Menopause is a new adventure
Strap it and enjoy the ride



Message from Co – editor



Dr Smita Barya (Goyal)
Co-Editor POISE,
Treasurer, Udaipur Menopause Society

It is my pleasure to get this opportunity to collect and compile articles from experts for publication of this issue of POISE. Firstly I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr Anju Soni, Dr Bipasha Sen, Dr Shubha Sethia and Dr Sudha Gandhi madam for showing trust in me and giving me this opportunity.

It was indeed a nice experience to go through various articles related to MENTAL HEALTH. Various articles explaining importance of mental health, mental health related changes during menopause, its relation to different aspects of individual's health and different remedies of management of mental health issues during menopause. I hope, knowledge shared here will expand your insight and will be helpful for your personal and professional dealing with mental health related issues during menopause.

“The number one root of all illness, as we know, is STRESS” (Marianne Williams)

Wish you all stress free life



MENOPAUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH: A GUIDE TO INNER BALANCE

Dr. Sudha Gandhi

President,
Udaipur Menopause Society



Our mental health and physical health are strongly linked. Menopause is met with physical changes and an emotional reaction to these changes. For instance, as hormonal shifts change our body's functioning and reproductive health, our appearance also changes. As we experience changes in appearance and a perceived decline in femininity and beauty, there is a risk of developing a negative body image - a risk factor for eating disorders.

Psychological symptoms during menopause include mood dysregulation including irritability and anxiety, sleep issues, forgetfulness, trouble concentrating, difficulty making decisions and loss of libido. Research suggests a vulnerability to depression and anxiety as well. Hence, for holistic wellbeing, it is important to attend to our mental health during menopause. Some measures to do so are:

- Increased awareness regarding the physical and psychological changes and symptoms, and addressing questions of menopausal women.
- Joint decision-making regarding drug treatment with a discussion on risks and benefits, side effects, and duration of treatment.
- Lifestyle, nutrition and self-care: Dietary advice should consider the woman's lifestyle and the presence or absence of diseases. Awareness should be created regarding the phytoestrogens and lycopene-rich foods in the Indian diet.
- Exercise is recommended to manage weight, improve bone density, balance and coordination, muscle strength and joint mobility (to reduce the risk of osteoporosis). Exercise can also improve sleep and mood.
- Early pharmacological management with hormone replacement therapy (whenever indicated) during menopause can decrease or prevent psychological and genitourinary symptoms and improve quality of life.
- Resilience building: Good self-esteem, positive attitude to menopause, self-compassion, a feeling of mastery, work satisfaction, etc., can give rise to a feeling of well-being in the menopausal period.
- Increased social support

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MOOD SWING: EXPLORING ABSURD BEHAVIOUR ES MENOPAUSE

Dr. Bipasa Sen

Secretary General,
Indian Menopause Society, 2024-25



Various Neuropsychiatric symptoms may present at menopause transition and are included in Menopause Rating Scale. These include mood swings, depression, anxiety, irritability, crying spells, cognitive decline, memory loss, decreased ability to cope with mundane problems. Although mood swings are mostly due to estrogen decline but it is challenging to stamp all the symptoms to be due to hormonal fluctuations. Some of these problems are age related and occur in men also.

Most relevant causes of mood swing at menopause may be mentioned as –

1. Falling sex hormone level.
2. Genetic predisposition.
3. Psychosocial vulnerability.
4. Excessive stress.
5. Somatic diseases.
6. Sex – women show more vulnerability than men.
7. Family issues.

Prevalence :

In a study conducted by Indian Menopause Society, out of 1801 women at menopause transition, 1609 reported some mood swing/irritability / lack of initiative and only 192 women were asymptomatic. According to North American Menopause Society (NAMS) nearly 23% of pre and post menopausal people go through mood swing.

To differentiate Mood Swing from Depressive Disorder:

Mood Swing is common during menopause transition but Depressive Disorder and Suicide Attempt are NEVER found to be aggravated by menopause. So a detailed history is important to elicit simple Mood Swing and rule out severe Depression and Psychiatric Disorder.

Mood Swing of menopause may be related to :

1. Untreated vasomotor symptoms.
2. Nutritional Deficiencies.
3. Hypothyroidism, Diabetes.
4. Medications for acute or chronic disease treatment.
5. Remarkable life events.
6. Fluctuating economic status.
7. Anhedonia (inability to enjoy easily).
8. H/o PMS or postnatal depression in early life.
9. Dissatisfied sex life.

Menopause and mood swings



How to control mood swings of menopause :

1. Keep a diary – to note down one's thoughts as and when wish.
2. Balanced nutrition.
3. Regular exercise, Yoga, Meditation, Tai chi.
4. Proper and quality sleep – if necessary with sleep inducing diet and medications.
5. Cut down alcohol.
6. Complementary therapies.
7. Nurturing hobbies and pet therapy.
8. Volunteering or enrolling in some course of social work which improves self esteem.
9. Think positive.
10. In selected cases, SSRI like paroxetine, escitalopram, fluoxetine or SNRI like venlafaxine.
11. Low dose O.C. or MHT in selected cases.
12. Herbal treatment - St. John's Wort, Lemon Balm particularly in combination with Black Cohosh.

Mood Elevating Food :

1. Green leafy vegetables.
2. Platter containing multiple colour.
3. Whole grains.
4. Egg.
5. Oily fish (rich in Omega 3 fatty acid).
6. Phytoestrogen (Soya, Lentil).
7. Diet rich in magnesium.

Mood Favouring Vitamins and Minerals :

Vitamin D, Vitamin E, Vitamin B Complex (specially Vitamin B12) and Magnesium.

But the bottom line to cope with Mood Swing at Menopause is

***Remain Active
&
Think Positive***



NEUROTRANSMITTER SHIFTS- UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGES DURING MENOPAUSE

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A woman's lifespan is characterized by major hormonal transition periods beginning with rising estrogen level during puberty, high estrogen levels during pregnancy and rapid falls postpartum, declining levels during perimenopause and low levels postmenopausal.

Changes in neuroendocrine and neurotransmitter systems, related to decreased estrogen seem to negatively affect psycho-physical wellbeing of women and could explain, at least in part, the increased incidence of mental disorders and neurological in the postmenopausal era, respect to women in fertility age.

The brain represents an important target for estrogen and progesterone effects (The women hormones). Both hormones provide specific neuroendocrine conditions through which brain structure and function are modulated across a woman's life span. The trophic effects of ovarian hormones emerge early in brain development and remain throughout adolescence and adulthood.

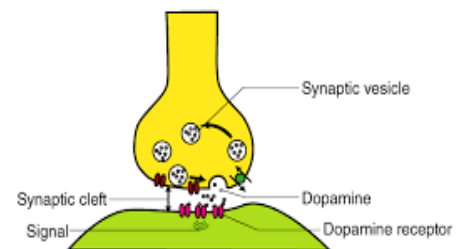
Many of these actions occur in brain regions involved in

- Learning And Memory
- Emotion
- Motivation
- Motor Control
- Cognition
-

Specific structural effects of estrogen and progesterone include neurite outgrowth and synaptogenesis, dendritic branching and myelination (main process of working of nerve cells and neurotransmitters).

Let's understand what neurotransmitters is A chemical messenger that carries messages between nerve cells and other cells in the body. Neurotransmitters are chemicals in your brain that regulate your moods. Three of the leading players are serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine.

NEUROTRANSMITTER



As estrogen levels fall, changes occur in the morphology, number, and interactions of neurotransmitters. This is the reason why menopause is also a neurological change, as shown by many hallmark symptoms of menopause, especially forgetfulness, sleep disturbances, altered mood, and hot flashes. Ovarian and brain health are therefore inextricably linked in women.

To reduce negative impact of these changes, we can implement balanced strategies, Like- **increasing neurotransmitters production**, for which there are a variety of different foods that can impact your neurotransmitter levels. You can't get serotonin directly from your diet. Instead, look for sources of tryptophan, an amino acid that is converted to serotonin in your brain. Sources of tryptophan are chicken, turkey, eggs, organic dairy, fish, peanuts, pumpkin seeds, spinach, and asparagus. As a side note, about 95% of the serotonin your body needs to function is produced inside your gastrointestinal tract. Therefore, it is essential to have a healthy functioning gut before you began supplementation.

Dopamine and norepinephrine levels can be increased by supplementing with tyrosine, an amino acid that is the building block of both neurotransmitters. Look for seeds, nuts, beans, lentils, grass-fed meats, egg whites, turkey, chicken, shrimp, and non-GMO soy.

It is also important to remember food is only one piece of the puzzle. **Self-care, including managing stress levels, is essential to optimize your neurotransmitter levels.**



BRAIN FOG .. HOW TO DEAL WITH ?

Dr. Anju Soni

President
Indian Menopause Society



Have you ever experienced that you entered a room and forgot why you came there . You are frequently forgetting names of people places and things. Keeping your keys and forgetting where you left it . Wanted to put something in the fridge and absent mindedly opened the almirah Forgot an appointment or a bill payment which you had been very particular about earlier . Do you feel multitasking is becoming difficult day by day. Do you feel that you have become slow in learning new things, taking any decision or solving small problems baffles you now though it was not so earlier. Are you worried that these may be early symptoms of brain damage and cognitive decline. Well you need not worry, this is just brain fog . Women during menopause transition and after frequently complaint of forgetfulness and cognitive decline. Brain fog is a temporary phenomenon where women complain of a multitude of cognitive symptoms like memory and attention difficulties like forgetting names of people ,places and things or numbers and dates, difficulty in maintaining a train of thoughts, easy distractibility, Inability to concentrate, slowing down in learning new tasks , forgetting intention and difficulty switching between tasks ,Remember this is not dementia .Dementia usually occurs after 65 yrs of age and not every women who has brain fog will develop dementia . difference between brain fog and dementia is in dementia person forgets names of one,s close relatives or names of day today articles say a scissor ,forgets his/her own house or office address ,asks the same question again and again , and at times forgets how to do daily tasks like dressing up ,cooking ,,driving ,reading ,writing ,counting ,calculating etc

Next question which arises is can we prevent brain fog or dementia . Well the answer is to maintain good brain or mental health just as you maintain heart health . Good physical activity, nutritious diet are common to both, but for brain health we need to do brain exercises. if there are some areas of brain which are ageing we can use other areas to rewire our brain . So become a learner, learn new skills ,develop hobbies ,socialize with family and friends ,play games ,dance ,play sudoku ,solve puzzles ,keep reading and writing . All these will reactivate newer areas of your brain. Of course a good night sleep with regular sleeping habits and destressing will further help. Remember a healthy heart is the road to healthy brain . keep sugar ,blood pressure and lipid profile under control. Say no to smoking,avoid alcohol .Be a master of your own brain

“ Roll up your sleeves Rewire your brain, “



RED FLAG SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

Dr. Shubha Sethia

Chairperson

Club 35+ Public Awareness Committee

IMS Publication POISE



The feeling of sadness is a commonly encountered emotion in day-to-day life. It's usually short-lived, bounces back to normal, and is associated with life stressors. However, if this same emotion lasts for more than two weeks, is present most time of the day and most of the day, and affects an individual's QOL and role functioning we label this as clinical depression or a depressive disorder and needs our immediate attention

In India 1 in 20 people are affected by depression, females 1.7x more than males with a prevalence of 36.8% in females. However, women hardly ever discuss it with anyone and keep suffering in silence, and it is usually labeled as a personality defect and socially stigmatized. Only 50% of these women are diagnosed and barely 20% receive treatment.

The hormonal fluctuations during menopause increase the risk of depression by 1.74 times. With 45-68% of women being affected at one or other time during this transition period. Life events like work pressure, caring for ailing parents, looking after growing children, or children leaving home, financial crisis, death of a partner or a close relative, health issues, fear of future health problems, divorce, marital disharmony are many factors that may contribute to these depressive episodes. Women who have had previous episodes of depression or those who have suffered from premenstrual syndrome are more liable. A few studies have shown that women who suffer from hot flashes, especially night sweats are at a higher risk.

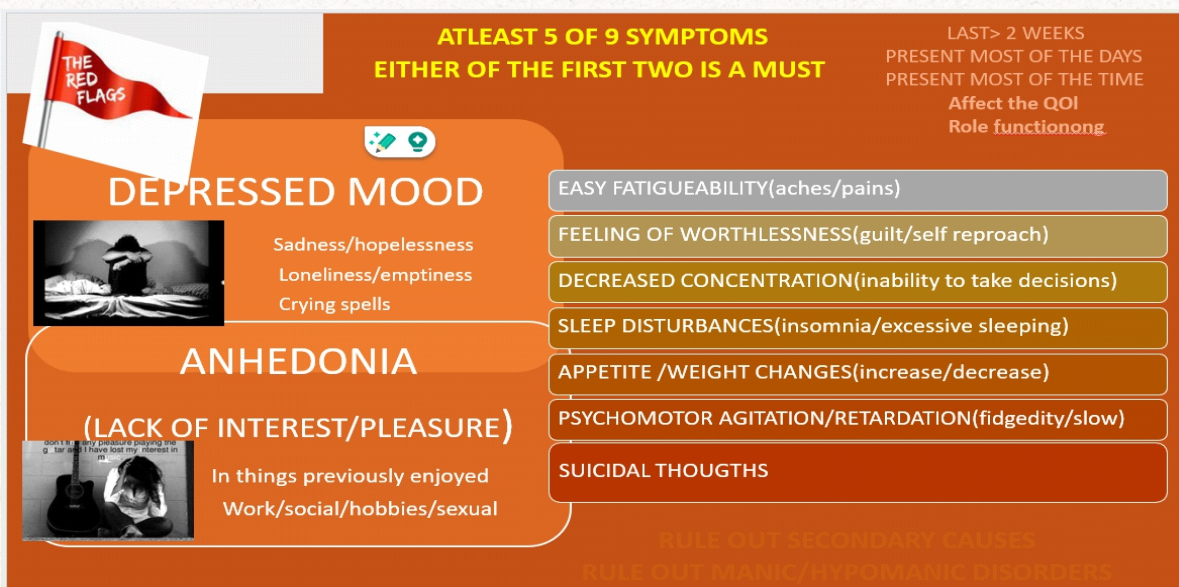
Recognizing the symptoms in time would help in adequate and timely treatment with a great improvement in QOL

There are 9 red flag signs of depression and the presence of at least 5 out of the 9 with either the first or second being present is needed for the diagnosis of depression let us see what these signs are

- 1) **Depressed mood**, sadness, hopelessness, loneliness, emptiness, or crying spells
- 2) **Lack of interest** in what one previously enjoyed in life including work, hobbies, social interaction, sex
- 3) **Feeling of worthlessness**, guilt or remorse
- 4) **Difficulty in concentration**, inability to make decisions
- 5) **Sleep disturbances**, either insomnia or excessive sleeping
- 6) **Appetite and weight changes**, both increase or decrease
- 7) **Psychomotor agitation or retardation**. person may either be slowing down or getting fidgety
- 8) **Easy fatigability**, aches and pains
- 9) **Suicidal thoughts**

At times the depressive symptoms may overlap the symptoms of menopausal mood swings, but a careful evaluation can help differentiate one from another.

All women who fulfill the criterion of clinical depression should be offered counselling to use relaxation techniques, promote socialization, intermingle with family and friends, develop hobbies, Group activities, adequate sleep regular exercise and a healthy diet can help alleviate the symptoms, apart from these psychotherapy usually helps. If the woman does not respond she can be put on antidepressants. The effect usually starts in 2-12 weeks, needs to be continued for around nine months, and then tapered gradually. The myth that once put on antidepressants women become dependent on them needs to be busted.



COGNITIVE SHIFTS: UNDERSTANDING MENOPAUSE-RELATED CHANGES IN THINKING, MEMORY, AND CONCENTRATION

Dr Girija Wagh,

Vice President FOGSI

Professor & HOD, Obstetrics & Gynaecology

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Menopause: the grand finale of a woman's reproductive years, often accompanied by a medley of symptoms that can make even the most composed among us feel like we're starring in a sitcom. Among these, cognitive changes—affectionately known as “menopause brain”—can be particularly perplexing. Let's explore these shifts with a dash of humour and a sprinkle of science.

The Science Behind the Fog

Menopause typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, marking the end of menstrual cycles and a significant drop in oestrogen levels. This hormonal rollercoaster can lead to a variety of cognitive changes, including difficulties with memory, concentration, and overall mental clarity. Imagine your brain as a well-oiled machine suddenly deprived of its favourite lubricant—things start to get a bit squeaky.

Memory Lapses: Where Did I Put My Keys?

One of the most common complaints during menopause is forgetfulness. Women often find themselves asking, “Where did I put my keys?” or “What was I saying?” more frequently than before. This isn't just a figment of your imagination; studies have shown that fluctuating oestrogen levels can impact the hippocampus, the brain's memory centre. So, if you find yourself searching for your glasses while they're perched on your head, you're not alone.

Concentration: The Elusive Butterfly

Concentration during menopause can feel like trying to catch a butterfly with a net full of holes. Tasks that once required minimal effort now demand Herculean focus. This can be particularly frustrating for women who are at the peak of their careers or managing busy households. The culprit? Those pesky hormonal changes again, which can disrupt neurotransmitter function and make it harder to stay on task.

An Example to Illustrate

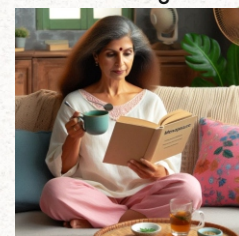
Let's take the example of Janvi, a 52-year-old marketing executive. Janvi has always been sharp as a tack, juggling multiple projects with ease. But lately, she's noticed a change. During a crucial presentation, she suddenly blanks out on a key statistic. Panic sets in, and she fumbles through her notes, only to find the number staring back at her. Later, she laughs it off with her colleagues, joking that her brain has gone on vacation without her.

Janvi's experience is a classic example of menopause-related cognitive shifts. Her brain, once a reliable ally, now occasionally feels like a mischievous trickster. But with a bit of humour and understanding, Jane navigates these changes, knowing she's not alone in this journey.

Embracing the Change

While these cognitive shifts can be disconcerting, it's important to remember that they are a normal part of the menopausal transition. Strategies such as maintaining a healthy diet, regular exercise, and mental exercises like puzzles or learning new skills can help mitigate these effects. And, of course, a good sense of humour goes a long way.

In conclusion, menopause-related cognitive changes are a blend of biology and life's natural progression. By understanding the science behind these shifts and embracing them with a light-hearted approach, women can navigate this stage with grace and a smile. After all, laughter might just be the best medicine for a foggy brain.



MIND-BODY MEDICINE IN MIDLIFE

Dr . Sunila Khandelwal

Senior Consultant Gynaecologist, Fortis Escorts Hospital, Apex Hospitals, Jaipur, India
Ex. Member Board of Trustee, Treasurer, Secretary General CAMS,
International Menopause Society
Past President, Indian Menopause Society



The Way forward....

As life expectancy increases worldwide, a growing number of menopausal women are facing psychological and physical symptoms. "Menopause is an ideal time to begin or reinforce healthy changes to life" for improving QOL in golden year. Each woman's experience of this transition is unique and how she feels is not simply a matter of hormone levels. **Biology plays a role, but so do the interactions among your mind, body, & environment. The basic philosophy is that Your attitudes, health care choices and lifestyle behaviours can significantly affect your overall well-being.**

This calls for individualized patient care in view of unique bio-psycho-sociocultural and environmental factors and access to care. Increased understanding of the risks and side effects associated with medical interventions for the management of menopausal symptoms has contributed to the appeal of alternative modalities of management.

Mind-body medicine is a holistic approach that aims to increase a healthy life style of people and their resilience. The National Institute of Health (NIH) defines "Mind/body medicine focuses on the interactions among the brain, mind, body, behaviour and the powerful ways in which emotional, mental, social, spiritual and behavioural factors can directly affect health. It regards as fundamental approach that respects and enhances each person's capacity for self-knowledge and self-care. During the years around menopause, most women know instinctively that their bodies are changing. Learning to pay attention to what is happening and to describe what you're experiencing to your health care provider is an important part of self-care. It is key to getting the help you need, and by working in partnership with your clinician, you become an active participant. This puts you in the position to fully understand your options and make choices that feel right for you. After all, knowledge is power!

By embracing self-care, you can maximize your health and improve the quality of your life -- and manage menopause symptoms while you're at it. The best part is that many women truly enjoy the process. By incorporating a range of mind/body skills, you are able to more effectively manage stress, improve communication with our family, and reduce hot flashes and other menopause-related symptoms.

MBM intervention methods/techniques includes Relaxation techniques, hypnosis, imagination exercises, meditation, yoga, tai-chi, qigong, cognitive-behavioral techniques, group support & autogenic training.

Mind-body medicine has proven effective for a variety of chronic illnesses, especially in combination with conventional medicine. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses in Patients High blood pressure, Rehabilitation & secondary prevention of CAD, Cancer, Incontinence, sleeping disorders, headaches, chronic back pain, chronic inflammatory bowel disease, Menopause-related symptoms, Pain & pain-associated disability, on surgical outcomes have shown positive **evidence of mind-body medicine and mindfulness programs**. Studies have indicated that Yoga/MBIs are effective in mitigating menopausal symptoms. They primarily affect the psychological aspects of the symptoms, by reducing the reactivity to stimuli and dampening the perceived severity of symptoms; simple to follow and cost-effective with high compliance. The effectiveness of a conventional medication therapy can be optimized through mind-body interventions because the medication dose can be reduced (and thus the side effects). The "revolving door effect" can be broken through, because patients develop skills to maintain, despite their illness, a high QOL. Repeating positive affirmations when you wake up and when you are just about to sleep - will lead to positive thoughts, which will lead to positive actions and hence a positive life!



Recent Survey on "Attitude & practices of Clinicians towards INCORPORATING YOGA In Management of Menopause" done by Jaipur Menopause Society showed Yoga is the safest ,moderate to highly effective modality to cope with midlife crisis.

Future: Menopausal transition can be stormy, however through a step-wise management plan/ program, Guided by the information-motivation-behavioral skills model that identifies essential elements to reduce the short term& long-term consequences of Menopause, can improve the QOL of Midlife women. The prevention/reduction symptoms depend ultimately on individual life style changes & further research on motivation for behaviour change would be important in coping with midlife crisis.....an epidemic!

It is important that scientific societies devoted to female health should aid and promote yoga initiatives at individual, interpersonal, organizational& community level. IMS is promoting cost-effective programs aimed for optimizing good health of mature women, via its own educational programs but should also work in collaboration with local and regional medical societies, governments and NGOs. Yoga therapy becoming an accepted treatment that is eligible for insurance reimbursement even.

Message: The Mind/Body Medicine involves an interdisciplinary team of Exercise physiologists, Advanced practice nurses, Dietitians, psychologists & physicians; who together develop the strategies - "tools" The years around menopause are a great time to reassess your health care; tend to your physical, emotional, and spiritual needs;and look toward the future. Thousands of people have already completed mind/body programs (RAJYOGA MEDITATION) and made significant changes in their lives. The pilot studies demonstrated that this is a healthy, self-care approach to menopause, one that could not be accomplished by a prescription alone!

"Yoga Treats the person not the disease"



MOOD OVER MUSCLE: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL STRENGTH

Dr Smita Barya (Goyal)

Professor, ObGyn PMCH, Udaipur

Treasurer, Udaipur menopause society



Low mood can lead to diminished physical strength and elated mood can boost it up. This can be experienced when a loving friend comes to your place or kids staying in hostel arrive home during vacation, your physical strength improve exponentially to perform multiple tasks even if you are not full on. Menopausal transition is the time for an overwhelming wave of emotional changes. It is very frequent to experience the situation of bad mood and physical strength in perimenopausal and postmenopausal women so as the problem of backache and vague generalized pains. This relation between mood and muscle power is not just a coincidence but scientifically correlated as:

1. Stress initially increases cortisol level but, long lasting unnoticed stressors lead to depletion of cortisol and multiple chronic pains are being experienced
2. Stress can lead to NPFD (non relaxing pelvic floor dysfunction) and spasm of muscles of neck and back.
3. Stress can also multiply the pain of fibromyalgia.
4. Biofeedback loop of stress and pain is created when stress causes more pain and pain causes more stress and so on.

How to identify that your pain is stress related muscular pain—

Examine individual's whole picture to identify the cause of the problem. On **muscle testing**, muscles will be found tensed. Here a good physiotherapist can help by testing as well as by relaxing the affected muscle. This condition can also be identified by Psychosocial questionnaire to assess various stressors that affect muscle health.

Kinergetics- is a holistic approach to health. It uses muscle response testing to identify energy blockages and imbalances in the body and then uses correction techniques to restore balance.

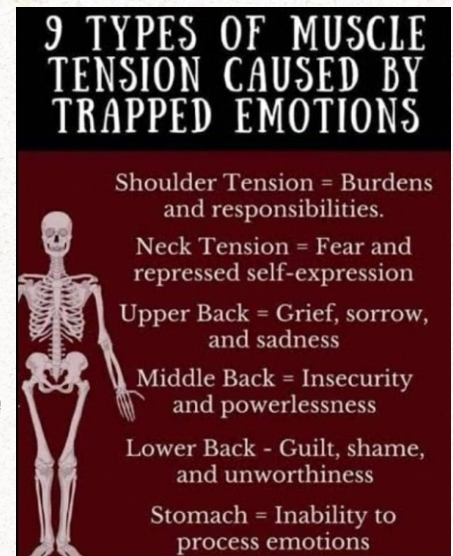
How to manage stress related muscle pain and muscle power?

Balanced daily routine, maintaining hydration, affirmation techniques.

Not only muscles need your attention, you have to nurture your mood too, to break biofeedback loop of pain -stress-pain-stress-pain. manage your muscle along with pampering of your mood in following ways:

1. Choose Your favorite activity or sport as workout.
2. Add meditation and mind relaxation techniques to yoga
3. Take psychotherapy along with physiotherapy whenever required.
4. Sometimes medicine affecting mood is required with analgesic for better symptom relief. (duloxetine pregabalin combination)
5. Mindful relaxation of pelvic floor.

Look well into yourself; There is a source of strength which will always spring up if you will always look there



SWEATS, SMILES AND SANITY - A MENOPAUSAL MELODY

Dr Meetu Babel

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Vice President
Udaipur Menopause Society



Menopause arrives, a new chapter unfolds,
A time of transformation, with stories retold.

Embrace the changes, though they may seem strange,
This is your journey a powerful range.

Hot flashes may hit, and moods may swing
But remember, dear friend, you're still the queen.

Breathe through the chaos, let mindfulness reign,
Find strength in the stillness, ease the strain.

Get moving, get grooving, lace up those shoe ,
Those jogging sneakers are waiting; it's time to choose.

A brisk walk or a dance, whether alone or with friends
Feel your energy rise as the stress gently bends.

Celebrate laughter share joy with your crew, You're not alone in this; they're here for you.
Talk about changes, let the stories flow, In the company of others, together you'll grow.

Nourish your body, fuel it with care, Balance those treats with green you can share.
Forget the creams that promise the stars, It's self-love and kindness that truly raises the bars.

Rediscover your passions, let your heart ignite,
Pick up that paintbrush or dance through the night.
Flaunt your colors, wear that bold shade of red, Embrace all your dreams, let them fill you instead.

In this phase of life, take it day by day,
Each moment is a treasure, in its own unique way.
Let go of the worries, the doubts, and the fears, You're stronger than you know; it's time to shift gears.

For mental wellness in menopause is your quest, Take it one step at a time; you'll find your best.
So here's to your journey, with courage and cheer, Menopause is just the beginning—your time is here!



MICROBIAL MIND: THE INFLUENCE OF GUT MICROBIOME ON MENTAL HEALTH

Dr Monica Singh,

Vice President, Bhopal Menopause Society

Consultant, Reproductive Medicine, Bhopal Fertility & Endoscopy Centre, Bhopal

Professor, LN Medical College, Bhopal



BACKGROUND:

Mental health is one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Mental disorders have emerged as a significant public health concern worldwide, and lead to huge medical burden and economic loss. Mental disorders mainly include anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), schizophrenia and eating disorders. Millions of people suffer from mental disorders which can influence study, work, and normal life of patients, and even lead to suicide. The whole family gets adversely affected.

INTRODUCTION OF MICROBIOTA-GUT-BRAIN AXIS:

The number of individuals experiencing mental disorders (e.g., anxiety and depression) has risen exponentially in the recent years especially after COVID pandemic, and therefore it is essential to seek prevention and treatment strategies. Several gut microbiota, especially *Firmicutes* and *Bacteroidetes*, affect mental health through the *microbiota-gut-brain axis*. Dietary components including probiotics (e.g., *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*), prebiotics (e.g., dietary fiber and alpha-lactalbumin), synbiotics, postbiotics (e.g., short-chain fatty acids), dairy products, spices (e.g., *Zanthoxylum bungeanum*, curcumin, and capsaicin), fruits, vegetables, medicinal herbs, and so on, could exert protective effects against mental disorders by enhancing beneficial gut microbiota while suppressing harmful ones.

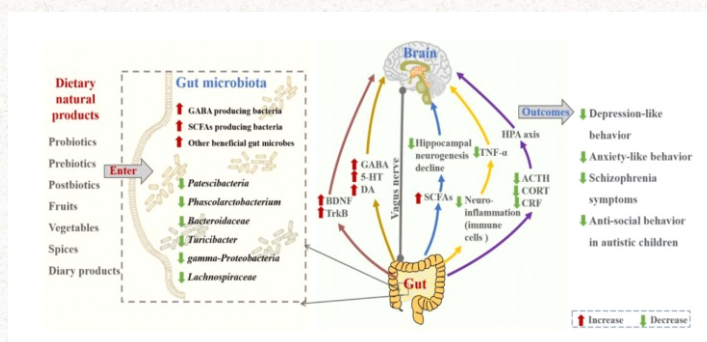


Image-1: Mechanism of Effect of Natural Dietary Products on Mental Disorders by targeting Gut Microbiota

GUT MICROBIOTA AND MENTAL DISORDERS:

The composition of gut microbiota is complex; some microorganisms are protective to mental health, while others lead to onset and development of mental disorders. Anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, autism spectrum disorder, schizophrenia and other mental disorders are affected by gut microbiome. Microbiota affecting mental disorders are shown in figure 2



Image-2: The Relationship of Gut Microbiota to Mental Disorders

Represents a positive association

Represents a negative association



HOW DIETARY COMPONENTS MODULATE GUT MICROBIOTA:

1.	PROBIOTICS	Probiotics, such as <i>Lactobacillus</i> , <i>Bifidobacterium</i> , <i>Pediococcus acidilactici</i> and <i>Akkermansia muciniphila</i> show significant preventive and therapeutic effects on several mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression. They influence the neurotransmitter metabolism, improve HPA axis hyperactivity, and increase the expression of BDNF and TrkB through modulating gut microbiota.
2.	PREBIOTICS AND POSTBIOTICS	Prebiotics (e.g., dietary fiber, GOS, B β -GOS [®] and alpha-lactalbumin) as well as postbiotics (such as Short Chain Fatty Acids) exert protective effects on mental health, especially in combination. Prebiotics could be potential agents to alleviate the side effects of antipsychotics.
3.	DAIRY PRODUCTS	Dairy products and their bioactive components show neuroprotective effects via modulation of gut microbiota. Since fermented dairy beverages contain some probiotics and prebiotics, more fermented dairy products should be investigated and developed with different beneficial bacteria combinations.
4.	SPICES	Spices and their components (such as <i>Zanthoxylum bungeanum</i> , curcumin, and capsaicin) show protective effects against anxiety and depression via regulating gut microbiota along with powerful antibacterial properties.
5.	OTHER NATURAL PRODUCTS	Several fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs could alleviate the severity of mental disorders and enhance mental health via modulation of gut microbiota. Additionally, tea (<i>Camellia sinensis</i> , such as green tea and black tea) and tea-like beverages (non- <i>Camellia sinensis</i> tea, such as vine tea and sweet tea) are popular beverages with profound bioactivity and beneficial effects.

CONCLUSION:

At present, most studies about gut microbiota with mental disorders focus on the genus level, but more studies are needed at the species level in future, because the different species in the same genera could have different effects on mental disorders.

Susceptible population should be able to choose natural dietary products to maintain mental health. Natural dietary products need to be developed into affordable pharmaceuticals and functional foods for the prevention and treatment of several mental disorders.



SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL FITNESS AND MENTAL WELLBEING

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Rajkot



During these past few years, specially the post COVID era , we have seen a rise in mental health awareness and its importance. It's the one good thing that COVID gave us.

Most often we think mental health and physical health are exclusive of each other. But are physical fitness and mental health really exclusive of each other?? The connection between the two forms a symbiotic relationship where improvements in one domain leads to positive changes in the other. Lets find out how ??



Healthy **BODY** leads to healthy Mind!!

- **Enhancing Mood: According** to general results, exercise enhances mood and self-esteem while decreasing stress tendencies, a factor known to aggravate mental and physical diseases.
- Human beings produce more of these two neurochemicals when they engage in physical activity. Human bodies manufacture opioids and endocannabinoids that are linked to pleasure, anxiolytic effects, sleepiness, and reduced pain sensitivity.
- **Improved attention and focus:** Exercise can improve attention, focus, memory, cognition, language fluency, and decision-making .
- **HPA axis:** Regular physical activity improves the functioning of the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, lowering cortisol secretion and restoring the balance of leptin and ghrelin.
- **Immunomodulatory effects:** Regular exercise has immunomodulatory effects such as optimising catecholamine, lowering cortisol levels, and lowering systemic inflammation. Physical activity has been shown to increase plasma brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which is thought to reduce amyloid-beta toxicity linked to Alzheimer's disease progression.
- **Improved sleep:** Studies have shown both the quantity and quality of sleep improved after regular fitness training.
- **Depression and Anxiety:** The "endorphin hypothesis" states that physical activity causes the brain to produce more endogenous opioid peptides, which reduce pain and boost mood. The latter reduces feelings of worry and hopelessness commonly seen in patients with depression.
- **Better cognitive health and performance:** Research shows improved physical fitness and activity improves cognitive performance.

Does healthy **MIND** lead to healthy body??

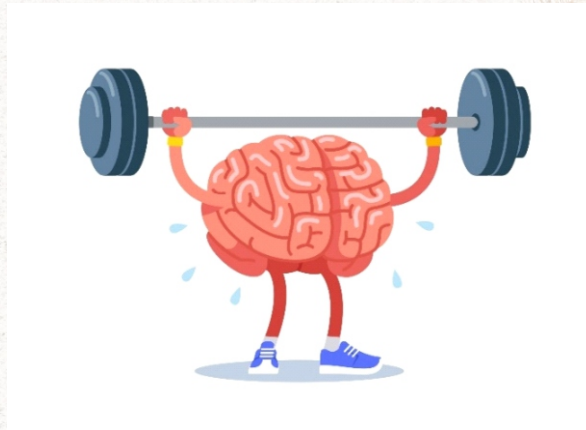
Yes. Absolutely!! Mental well being is directly related to motivation levels. A positive mental state encourages individuals to set fitness goals, stick to routines and overcome obstacles to achieving fitness goals like attending gym regularly or going on those regular walks to achieve the steps target.

Mental well being provides the resilience needed to push through the physical limits.

Mindfulness techniques can help in enhancing physical performance by improving focus.



The symbiotic relationship between physical fitness and mental well being highlights the importance of holistic approach to health. It suggests that an individual's overall wellness is best achieved by addressing both physical and psychological dimensions. Physical fitness and mental wellbeing are intertwined. Regular physical activity is a powerful tool for improving mental health, while strong mental well being is essential to maintain physical fitness. Incorporating activities that blend exercise with mental relaxation such as yoga, hiking, martial arts offers both mental clarity and physical strength.



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LIFESTYLE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Dr Sangeeta Paliwal

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Nowadays especially in post Covid era, human beings are going through a lot of physical & mental stress. This is taking a big toll on their lives, be it cardiac arrest, premature cataract, poor pulmonary reserve, depression, anxiety, loss of job, etc.

Lifestyle changes have been advocated time & again to improve physical & mental health. These are:

1. Maintain daily habits that release Happy Hormones:

One of them is writing down a journal or visualising Gratitude daily after getting up & before sleeping. This yields immense peace of mind & takes only a few minutes daily to promote healthy coping.

2. Exercise:

The best is to exercise daily amidst Nature in the morning whether be it a brisk walk, jog, cycling, yoga, stretching with resistance bands, and so on & so forth. It helps in releasing Happy Hormones & leads to better sleep.

3. Being positive & socializing:

Bonding with family & friends releases Happy Hormones that infuse zeal & zest, making us look forward & move on in life, despite ups & downs. Isolation leads to boredom, depression & dementia.

4. Healthy Diet:

Whether it be vegetarian, vegan, or non-vegetarian foods, a healthy diet keeps many diseases at bay viz diabetes, hypertension, autoimmune disorders of the gut, skin, muscles, etc. Cooking is also a stressbuster for many as it raises Happy Hormones.

5. Sleep:

These days soulful sleep has become a priority to many, irrespective of age. Sleep apnoea, sleepwalking, and lack of sound sleep are all related to stressful lifestyles in some or the other way. Sleep hygiene & medicines play quite an important role here.

6. Mindfulness:

Daily Meditation incorporates relaxation techniques via deep breathing & helps us to stay calm.

7. Pursuance of one's passions:

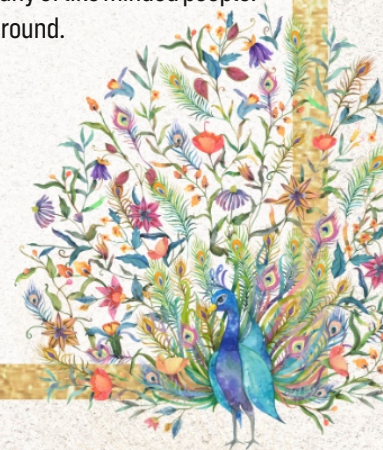
Hobbies & leisure activities lead to the release of Happy Hormones especially post-retirement, loss of a partner & suffering from various chronic illnesses. There are clubs viz 35+, laughter club, pet lover's club, music lover's club, photography club, bird watchers' club, readers' club, senior citizens' club, laughter club, etc to pacify one's emotional turbulence.

8. Set Goals:

Means creating schedules to achieve success. These keep one busy throughout the day positively. But burnout & frustration shouldn't happen by crazily pursuing them & setting difficult deadlines.

9. Music or Dance:

This is becoming quite popular these days amongst all age groups. It boosts one's mood as well as provides company of like minded people. perfect, so embrace the beauty of imperfections. Forget, forgive & move forward as one can't control everything around.



10. **Reduce Screen Time:**

People of all age groups have become addicted to various social media that are often fake, luring, suicidal, cause dry eyes, neck stiffness & obesity. Daily fixing of screen time has become a necessity now.

11. **Live in the moment:**

Cribbing over one's past all the time makes the present dull & stressful. Anxiety about future spoils the present moments. We should let go of all the negative vibes, people & surrounding. Create a Happy space around by living with people with positive mindset. No one is perfect, so embrace the beauty of imperfections. Forget, forgive & move forward as one can't control everything around.

12. **Learn to say No:**

Negative self-talk, materialism & comparing oneself to others brings about sadness, depression & low self esteem. Instead, focus on one's strength to get a positive outcome. Always remember that Self care isn't being Selfish

13. **Substance use:**

Reducing alcohol & drug abuse can lead to mood improvement & clarity. Reducing Caffeine can help decrease anxiety & improve sleep

14. **Mental Stimulation:**

Learning new skills & creativity provide a sense of accomplishment & purpose. Reading & solving puzzles can keep the mind sharp & active reducing stress & negativity. This goes a long way in preventing Dementia & Alzheimer's.

15. **Professional Help:**

Therapy & counseling by a Mental Health Professional can tackle many mental health issues. This shouldn't be considered a taboo by the attendants.

16. **Environment:**

Decluttering & organizing a clean & Happy space can reduce stress & improve focus. Natural light exposure especially on getting up in the morning can reduce gloomy pictures & lift up one's mood.

To wrap up, making gradual changes in lifestyle in the fore mentioned spheres can lead to improvement in mental health significantly. But all these need patience, resilience & self compassion to bring about transformation.



EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION : MENTAL HEALTH AND SEXUAL WELLNESS

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Mental health and sexual wellness are deeply interconnected, yet they are often overlooked in discussions about women's health. Understanding this relationship can empower women to prioritize their overall well-being.

How Mental Health Affects Sexual Wellness

Stress, anxiety, and depression can significantly impact sexual desire and satisfaction. High stress levels trigger cortisol release, which suppresses libido, while depression and anxiety often reduce interest in intimacy or create difficulties with arousal. Additionally, medications like antidepressants can sometimes lead to sexual dysfunction, creating a challenging cycle.

How Sexual Wellness Supports Mental Health:

A healthy sexual life positively influences mental health by releasing mood-boosting chemicals like endorphins and oxytocin. These enhance emotional connections, elevate self-esteem, and reduce feelings of loneliness. For women, sexual well-being is closely tied to confidence, relationships, and overall happiness.

Breaking the Taboo

Cultural stigmas and societal pressures often prevent women from discussing sexual health openly. However, normalizing these conversations is crucial for addressing issues and seeking support. Women should feel empowered to consult healthcare providers about concerns without fear of judgment.

A Holistic Approach

Maintaining sexual and mental health requires a combined effort:

Mindfulness: Practices like yoga or meditation help reduce stress and improve body awareness.

Therapy: Professional counseling can address underlying psychological or relational issues.

Communication: Openly discussing desires and challenges with partners fosters intimacy and understanding.

By acknowledging the connection between mental health and sexual wellness, women can embrace a more balanced, fulfilling approach to their well-being—both mentally and physically.

Quick Tip: Never hesitate to seek professional help for persistent concerns. A holistic focus on mental and sexual health leads to a happier, healthier life.

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SNOOZE AND SERENITY: UNDERSTANDING THE VITAL LINK BETWEEN SLEEP AND MENTAL WELL-BEING



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Sleep is considered a time for our body to rest and rejuvenate, but its role in mental well-being is just as critical. The relationship between sleep and mental health is bidirectional; poor sleep can contribute to mental health issues and even the healthiest mind can begin to suffer, while mental health disorders can disrupt sleep patterns. Understanding this connection is essential for maintaining both physical, emotional and psychological balance.

The Science Behind Sleep and Mental Health:

The brain undergoes crucial restorative processes during sleep, particularly during deeper stages such as rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. REM sleep is associated with dreaming and emotional regulation, and it plays a key role in processing memories and balancing mood. When we sleep, the brain clears out toxins, consolidates learning, and helps regulate emotions.

A lack of sleep disrupts these processes, making it harder for brain to manage stress, process emotions, and focus on tasks. Over time, sleep deprivation can lead to heightened levels of stress hormones like cortisol, which are linked to anxiety, depression. Inadequate sleep also impairs cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and decision-making, weakens emotional regulation.

Sleep Deprivation and Mental Disorders

Research has consistently shown a strong link between sleep disorders and mental health conditions. A 2018 study published in Lancet Psychiatry revealed that improving sleep through cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) significantly reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety in individuals with insomnia.

Mental health issues can also manifest in disrupted sleep patterns. Individuals with anxiety may find it difficult to fall asleep due to racing thoughts, while those with depression often experience either insomnia or excessive sleep. A study by the Harvard Mental Health Letter pointed out that chronic insomnia increases the risk of developing a mood disorder tenfold. Conversely, quality sleep enhances:

- Mood stability
- Emotional resilience
- Mental clarity
- Problem-solving skills

Strategies for Better Sleep and Mental Well-being:

Improving sleep hygiene is essential for overall well-being.

- Establish a consistent sleep schedule.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Make your bedroom a sleep sanctuary.
- Avoid screens before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly.
- Practising relaxation techniques such as meditation
- Reduce Caffeine intake



SCREEN SWAY: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SCREEN TIME ON MENTAL WELLNESS

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In the month of Shravan, many Indians give up on various foods or eat only once. Giving modern touch to that tradition, my physician friend vowed to use his mobile for social media only once a day! Screen time has been a challenge not only for every individual and household but also for medical professionals. Covid 19 epidemic aggravated this due to forced home stays and the fact that children had to be given mobiles for their education.



Screen time refers to the time a person spends looking at a screen on a device such as a television, smartphone, computer, or game console.

Thankfully, the worries about its impact on cancer seems to have been favourably settled as of now, but the worries about the effects on mental wellness esp. of children and adolescents continue. Though more negative, some positives have been reported.

Negatives

1. Increased mental illness: Overuse of social media with its cyber bullying (Do this if you are young and virile or if you love your country/religion!), social comparison and unrealistic portrayals lead to negative self-perception (*Oh, she looks so good! Wish I had her figure*). This combined with constant doomscrolling (*The world is coming to an end! Our religion will cease to exist*), can lead to loneliness and cause anxiety and depression.
2. Sleep disturbance: Blue light exposure from screens interferes with melatonin production required for sleep. Late night gaming or watching intense videos cause overstimulation and disturb sleep. Constant alerts from notifications can also disturb sleep at night or cause distractions during daytime.
3. Physical issues – Excessive screen time causes sedentary behaviour, lack of outdoor physical activity and eating disorders which can all lead to lifestyle diseases.
4. Screen addiction (*Kya karoo, control hi nahi hota!*), Escapism and FOMO (*Fear of Missing Out – Sab kar rahe hain, main alag kaise rahu?*) all contribute to Mental illness.

Positives

1. Social connectivity – Aren't we lucky to be able to connect with our children, grandchildren and friends abroad and be in regular touch with our alumni friends?
2. Relaxation – Watching a favourite show or sport or playing a game for some time or expressing your creativity in some art form is relaxing and satisfying.
3. E-learning and access to information from search engines and artificial intelligence along with self-help apps have certainly made life easy.

Balance

So, though there is no doubt about the harmful effects of excessive screen time, it's not all bad only. We can keep enjoying the good and reducing the bad by -

1. Setting time limits – both for ourselves and minor children can reduce the addiction and prevent mental fatigue. We can't only lecture the young - we must set an example too!
2. Encouraging physical activity and outdoor sports.
3. Promoting mindful use of the screen for educational activities, social interactions and occasional entertainment.
4. And finally - as suggested in the beginning, a digital detox for some hours or days.



MENTAL WEIGHS: INTERPLAY BETWEEN OBESITY AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

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'Menopause isn't ending; It's a new beginning- a time to reclaim your health, vitality and power.'

Postmenopausal women suffer from variety of health issues and morbidities associated with hormonal changes. Obesity is one of the most important factors affecting mental health. Obesity and Mental health are components of metabolic syndrome. Loe et al. concluded that obesity is related to increased severity of post-menopausal symptoms. Obesity is a contributing factor for hormonal changes. Esposito and Glugliano reported direct relationship between mental health and obesity.

Various types of mental health issues associated with obesity are depression, anxiety, Cognitive decline and sleep disorders. There is bidirectional relationship between Obesity and Mental health.

Possible causes contributing to it are:

1. Hormonal changes:- In women, lowered estrogen levels during the postmenopausal stage have been linked to depression, reduced libido, low concentration and cognitive disorders (Schmidt et al. 2015).
2. In PoM women, high BMI and abdominal obesity are associated with sleep disturbances, decreasing deep sleep, and sleep efficiency increasing the risk of obstructive sleep apnoea (Naufel et al.)
3. Self-esteem and body image: - obesity may lead to negative body image and reduced quality of life.



I am sharing a good example of Mrs. Sangeeta, who has been 50 year old working woman and postmenopausal for last 4 yrs. Her BMI is greater than 30. She experiences hot flushes, night sweats, sleep disturbances, mood swings, and lacks of concentration, decreased libido and anxiety. She has many more co-morbidities associated with obesity like hypertension, hyperlipidemia and diabetes so she is a poor candidate for HRT.

Management:-

Comprehensive treatment: - Simultaneous treatment of both the condition is effective in addressing the symptoms. Exercise and caloric restriction combined with phytoestrogens improves the quality of life in the postmenopausal women with improvement in the mental and physical health. Social and family support also helps the patient to recover from psychological disturbances.

Combined administration of fluoxetine and melatonin has been reported as a useful option in treating mood, sleep, and appetite disorders in overweight post-menopausal women.

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THE SILENT STRUGGLE: UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF PREMATURE MENOPAUSE

Dr Sujata Dalvi

President

Mumbai Menopause Society (2023 – 25)



Introduction:

Early menopause challenges emotional health with view of oneself and causes physical and mental symptoms that are difficult to manage. It varies with individuals, depending upon cause, things happening around and emotional support. Women may experience decreased self-esteem, well-being and self-satisfaction with anxiety, stress, depression and mood disturbance. 'Premature menopause' is now being referred as 'premature ovarian insufficiency' (PIO) to reduce stigma for younger women going through menopause. Incidence being 1% of women before 40 years.

Early menopause is associated with poor psychological health, as when young women realises that she has reached early menopause, it comes as 'sudden shock' with feeling of 'out of sync' with their peer.

Neurobiological Theory:

Female sex hormone has neuro protective and anti-ageing property. Sudden precipitous fall / fluctuations in estrogen level leads to depressive symptoms. Altered testosterone and genetic predisposing factors affects metabolism of these neurotransmitters.

Factors:

Hormonal change, menopausal symptoms like hot flushes, sleep disturbance, fertility problems, sexual function, relationship issues, health (NCDs – cancer) related issues are responsible for alteration in mental health with increasing risk of developing anxiety, depression and dementia. (Alzheimer's disease)

Premature Failure of Ovarian function:

Erratic decline in estrogen affects brain leading to cognitive decline in longer term. Increased memory complaints, poor verbal fluency is seen with increased risk of psychomotor speed decline. Cognitive decline can impact capacity to work, make decision and interact socially.

Depression affects personal / social life, leading to fatigue and insomnia. Stress, adverse events, biological, psychological and social factors are associated with depression and can increase later in life. Attaining menopause prematurely leads to amplification of symptom of depression.

Insomnia is caused by hot flushes, body weakness, headache, depression, morbidity, medications. Treating insomnia increases cognitive function and overall quality of life.

Smoking / tobacco consumption leads to early menopause, depression, insomnia and cognition decline.

Management:

Monitoring mental health with social support from friends, family, peer group is helpful. Life-style modification, behavioural changes like regular exercise, adequate sleep, avoiding excessive alcohol – smoking – caffeine, making time for one-self are advisable.

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) - group or individual, help change ways of thinking, behaving and feeling. Psychological therapies / medications are helpful. HRT – Hormone Replacement therapy till usual age of Menopause followed by MHT – Menopausal Hormone Therapy is helpful in relieving mood symptoms and for long term health benefit.

To conclude,

Premature menopause or Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI) has effect on cognitive health, mediated through insomnia, depression, moderated by smoking / tobacco consumption habits. More study, public awareness and education is needed to maintain healthy lives.

References:

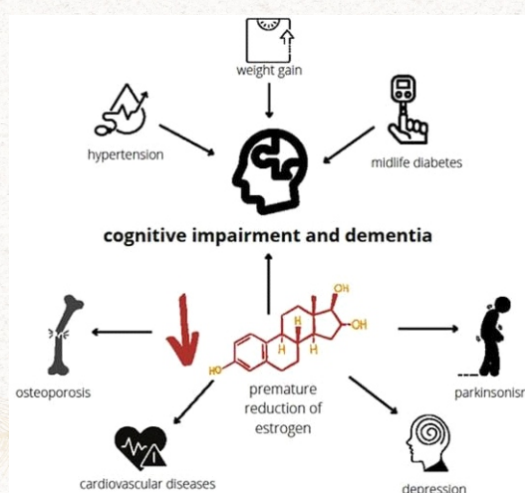
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MOTIVATING TIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE MENTAL WELLNESS AT MENOPAUSE

Dr Sudha Sharma

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Vice President, Indian Menopause Society 2024-25



The changes, the highs & Lows
And
The hormonal shifts There is power in that
- Michelle Obama



Menopause transition can lead to poor mental health and these females are vulnerable to mood changes and cognitive dysfunction.

Most commonly experienced problems include anxiety, mood swings, irritability, anger, depression, crying spells, sleeping problems, memory loss, difficulty to concentrate, forgetfulness, feeling of worthlessness & even suicidal tendencies.

It is a known fact that estrogen receptors are widely distributed throughout the brain and have neurotropic & neuroprotective effect. So declining Estrogen levels can trigger these Neuropsychiatric symptoms in vulnerable midlife women.

Risk Factors

Females who experience more hot flushes, night sweats, sexual dysfunction, poor social and financial support, smoking, sedentary lifestyle, obesity, early & surgical Menopause are more at risk of experiencing mental problems.



Management

Counselling of the patient and relatives (Especially Spouse & children) by providing them evidence-based information about Menopause and mental health is very important.

Preventive strategies play a crucial role in coping up with upcoming and ongoing challenges in these females during menopause.

More natural, nutritional solutions & healthy lifestyle may help them stay balanced without the need for more clinical solution such as antidepressants and HRT.

Food that can help boost your mood

Baddies to be avoided are...

Refined sugar, junk food, high salt, refined & processed food, saturated fat, caffeine, sugary drinks & alcohol... as all of them take their toll on your system.

Upgrade your diet by...

Staying well hydrated & incorporating seasonal fruits & vegetables, whole grains, lean sources of protein, dairy products that are rich in calcium and Vit. D, Soya based products along with vitamin & mineral supplements.



Exercise

Exercise helps release serotonin & dopamine, boosts the mood, helps maintain healthy weight. Low to moderate intensity exercises like walking, running, Pilates, cycling and aerobics are all good way to promote better sleep, mood and overall mental health. Yoga also stretches & tones key muscle groups and also helps relieve stress and anxiety.

Managing stress

Be socially active and maintain healthy relationships.

Many alternative remedies like aroma therapy, religious prayer, meditation, cognitive behavioral therapy & undergoing hypnosis helps reduce stress & depression.

Watch your comorbidities

Follow prescribed treatment as and when required with proper follow up.

Dear Friends

Your mental health is as important as your physical health,

It's not a destination, it's a journey

It's OKAY, not to be OKAY sometimes, do not regret about what has happened in the past.

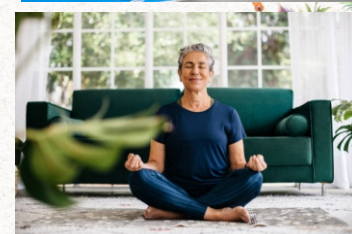
Try to be real instead of becoming perfect,

Take a break, enjoy your hobbies.

It is good to ask for support when you need it.

AS

YOU ARE WORTHY OF HAPPINESS AND PEACE OF MIND



COPING WITH CHANGE : MENTAL WELLNESS AND MENOPAUSE

Dr Jini Gupta

Consultant Gynecologist,
Jeevisha Clinic, Udaipur
Executive Committee member,
Udaipur Menopause Society



Menopause should be a welcoming change as if we are transitioning to another season

There are myriad physiological and psychological effects associated with the menopausal transition, including changes in cognitive function

Changes in sex steroid hormones, particularly 17 β -estradiol, which exerts potent effects on the brain, play a key role in memory performance at midlife as do vasomotor symptoms, sleep disturbance, and mood/anxiety. Following ways help in preventing and coping the mental changes

Be aware of Yourself, Be Mindful

Women should be aware and counselled to accept the mood changes, possible brain fogging, emotional swings. She should be made understand to accept these changes and to validate her that these are menopausal transition changes and can be well managed

Self help

Yoga, Meditation, Getting enough Sleep, Regular Exercise are often underestimated but play a vital role in promoting positive psychological changes. Studies found subjects that practiced yoga reported improvement in symptoms of irritability, anxiety, depressive mood, joint and muscular discomfort as well as sleeping problems.

Healthy lifestyle behaviors including regular physical activity, proper nutrition, and health responsibility; stress management, interpersonal relationships, and spiritual growth are all examples of health-promoting behaviors

Learn to let go

Mid life women have thoughts running in mind about their past bitter experiences in family or at work. They need to be counselled to learn to let go either by writing the recurrent thoughts or confront the issues. Learning to let go is a key step in self healing.

The women can be explained that overthinking or thinking about past is like drinking poison and wishing the other person to die

Connect with others

Speaking out to Family or Friends helps in coping the stress levels. Women can be advised to have peer groups. In this era where many midlife women have small kids, rather than struggling to manage kids along with perimenopause changes, they should be guided to be more playfully involved and make family play time as an essential aspect.

Making a routine

Grooming up, following a hobby, reading books before bedtime, ensuring the deserved sleep etc should be part of daily routine.

MHT

Menopause hormone therapy

Clinicians can counsel women about how menopause symptoms, estrogen, hormone therapy, and modifiable risk factors (eg, hypertension, sedentary lifestyle) can influence cognitive health



Estrogen can be neuroprotective only if commenced shortly after the onset of menopause Sustaining the “critical window hypothesis”, some epidemiologic studies have suggested that MHT in early post menopause is linked with a lower risk of dementia, whereas its later use is not(4)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Medical help should be sought if there are symptoms suggestive of depression, anxiety , sleep disturbances , panic attacks. Psychiatrist &Therapist consultation should be taken for coping the mental issues

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MINDFULNESS BASED THERAPY IN MENOPAUSE

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Revive women's Clinic, Ahmedabad



Ms Samipa, 47 years senior manager, finds herself in a difficult phase of her life. She started feeling hopeless or worthless, feeling numb, and losing interest in your normal activities with frequent crying spells. Her family members and colleagues also perceived change in her behavior. She was going through perimenopause. She is not alone, about 7 in 10 women experience vasomotor and psychosexual symptoms in perimenopause. All these symptoms cannot entirely be alleviated with hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Besides, HRT is contraindicated some people and some do not wish to go for hormone therapy for personal reasons. We have to accept that loss of estrogen is a permanent change. Some women cope well with their menopausal symptoms. However, there are others who struggle psychologically to deal with the changes. Simple lifestyle modifications can provide benefits to women with menopausal symptoms. Many studies have been shown promising results with the use of psychosocial interventions, including cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), for women who experience psychological challenges during the menopausal transition.

Mindfulness is an ancient concept derived from the Pali word sati, which can be translated as presence of mind. Mindfulness is a major feature of all Indian religious and philosophical traditions. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is a type of psychotherapy that involves a combination of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), meditation, and the cultivation of a present-oriented, non-judgmental attitude called "mindfulness." Interest in mindfulness is attributed to Jon Kabat-Zinn, who in 1979 introduced the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). Mindfulness can be practiced and taught to support lifestyle and behavioral changes. The nine attitudes are qualities that can be cultivated both in everyday life and in formal mindfulness practice. The attitudes, in no particular order, are Non-Judgment, Patience, Beginner's Mind, Trust, Non-Striving, Acceptance, Letting Go, Gratitude and Generosity.

Therapists make patients to pay attention to present-moment experience (awareness), usually with a focus on breathing, while dispassionately observing distracting mental phenomena in MBT interventions. The second key feature of MBT is training patients to develop an attitude of **acceptance** and **non-reactivity** to momentary experience. This helps the patients to reduce anxiety, depression, and irritability. There are a number of mindfulness techniques and exercises that are helpful.

Some of these include:

- **Meditation:** Meditation is a mental exercise that trains [attention](#) and awareness.
 - o **Guided meditation**- led by someone else's voice, either in person or virtually.
 - o **Mantra meditation** - involves repeating a sacred sound, word, or phrase to focus the mind and promote relaxation.
 - o **Mindfulness meditation** - it is [training your attention](#) to achieve a mental state of calm concentration and positive emotions.
 - o **Yoga**- a mind-body practice that began in India and has been practiced for thousands of years. The practice has components that focus on how you move and how you focus your thoughts.



[Body scan exercise](#)

- - involves paying attention to parts of the body and bodily sensations in a gradual sequence from feet to head.
- **Mindfulness practices**- Mindfulness practice is a way to gently retrain the mind to settle into the present moment. It's kind of like becoming a parent to your mind rather than letting it control you.
- **Qigong** - is a system of coordinated body-posture and movement, breathing, and [meditation](#)
- **Tai chi**- a mind-body exercise that combines movements, meditation, and deep breathing

A growing body of literature suggests Mindfulness Based Therapy (MBT) can reduce perceived stress and stress reactivity, enhance mood and wellbeing, and improve sleep. With mindfulness one can achieve outcomes such as effective self-care, decreased perceived stress, improved quality of life (QOL), and increased self-efficacy.

Emerging evidence suggests that mindfulness training can be effectively delivered via phone and internet, which may ultimately enhance efficient application in clinical practice.



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NUTRITION FOR NOURISHMENT: SUPPORTING MENTAL WELLNESS DURING MENOPAUSE THROUGH DIET

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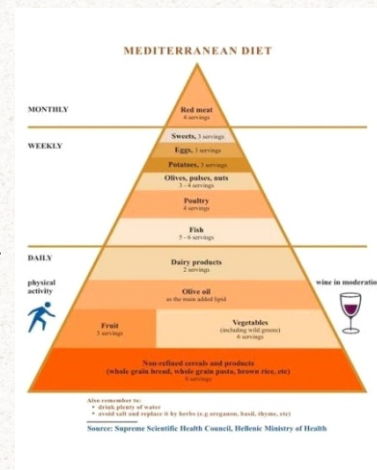
The relationship between our diet and mental health is complex. Poor nutrition may be a factor for low mood and improving diet will improve our mental and physical health. A healthy diet can help by providing nutrients that support brain health, bone health and mood. Weight management also plays major role in brain health. We have to make few changes in our diet so that we can navigate through menopause smoothly.

CHANGE YOUR DIET CHANGE YOUR MIND



Diet recommendation for healthy living:

- **Follow a fixed diet routine.**
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink at least 8 glasses of water per day. Even mild dehydration will affect mood, energy level and ability to think.
- **Protein** intake should be .8-1gm/kg/day, half of which should come from plant sources. Include proteins in every meal as it contains amino acids to regulate mood.
- **Eat right balance of fats.** Oil 2 level tsp/day is recommended. Use a mixture of oils. Adequate intake of n-3 LC PUFA is necessary. Avoid trans fats present in packaged food. Brain needs healthy fats to keep working well. Use Olive oil, Coconut oil, Canola oil, Mustard oil, Sunflower oil, etc. (monosaturated fat)
- Avoid refined **sugars**.
- **Salt** 1.5 tsp/day or 3-5 gm/day
- Fruits 100 gm/day
- Vegetables 300 gm/day
- Add seeds like flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds, fenugreek, saunf in salads and in curd.
- Snack on 2-4 nuts like almonds, walnuts and dried fruits.
- Food rich in phytoestrogen includes lentils, kidney beans, bengal gram and soyabean.
- Consume 500-600 ml of milk or curd (low fat)
- **Mediterranean diet:**
 - Good for mental health.
 - Includes plant based food and healthy fat.
 - High consumption of fruits and vegetables, nuts, legumes.
 - Moderate consumption of poultry, eggs and dairy products.
 - Occasional consumptions of red meat.
- **Omega- 3 fatty acids** good for brain health Sources: fatty fish (salmon), chia seeds, flax seeds, walnuts.
- **Calcium & vitamin D** Deficiency of vitamin D is associated with high risk of depression. Calcium acts as a neurotransmitter.
 - Sources of vitamin D: Sunlight exposure, fortified food and supplements.
 - Sources of calcium: milk and dairy products, green leafy vegetables, ragi, etc.
- **Gut Health:** There is direct connection between gut health and mental health. Fruits, vegetables, beans and probiotics are necessary for proper gut health. Millets and all mota anaaj (whole grain) are good for health.



Caffeine can cause sleep problems, irritation and anxiety.

- It is present in coffee, cola and energy drink and should be avoided.
- Limit intake of tea or coffee to 3 cups a day.
- **Fibres:** The heart friendly oats, whole grains and whole wheat bread as well as legumes such as lentils, chickpeas and beans are excellent source of fibres.
- Total dietary fibre should be 25 to 40 gm/day.
- **Magnesium:** Helps to reduce anxiety, sleep disturbances and irritability.
- Sources: Green leafy vegetables, almonds, cashews, dark chocolate
- **VIT B6 and B12:** Vital neurotransmitter; Support brain health and regulates mood.
- Sources: Poultry, eggs, dairy products, leafy greens
- **Herbs & spices:**
 - Turmeric contain curcumin which has anti-inflammatory property.
 - Saffron may help to alleviate depressive symptoms.
 - Lavender and chamomile have calming effects.

Incorporating these foods and nutrients into your diet along with regular physical activity and stress management techniques like meditation and CBT can help support mental wellness during menopause.

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POWER OF YOGA FOR MENOPAUSE MENTAL WELLNESS

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Menopause is defined as the permanent cessation of ovarian function and is thereby the end of a woman's reproductive phase. Increasing longevity in human population has resulted in more women living beyond the menopause. However menopause is not abrupt but a gradual decline in ovarian function and hormones which result in physical changes involving all the various systems of the body to variable extent. Most worrisome are the urogenital, sexual, cutaneous, bone and cardiovascular changes. These physical changes are accompanied by psychosomatic – fatigue, mood swings, decreased libido, vasomotor – hot flashes, cold sweats and mental health issues – anxiety, depression, low self esteem and sleep disturbances. The most effective therapy for menopause symptoms would be hormone (estrogen) replacement therapy. But because of concerns with long term HRT, an alternate medicine or complementary therapy is sort by most women. Yoga is the most commonly used, safe, effective complementary therapy for menopausal symptoms.

The Sanskrit word Yoga means 'to join or union' and the practice of Yoga brings this union to all levels of one's self. The practice of Yoga involves "asanas" or postures, "pranayama" or controlled breathing and "dhyana" or meditation. It results in improvement in muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, good posture, cardiorespiratory fitness, decreases body fat and maintains the load bearing capacity of bone and reduces fibromyalgia. Yoga promotes a sense of self awareness, self-discovery and acceptance of one's physical capabilities and strength. It encompasses not only physical and mental discipline but also emotional and spiritual exploration. Yoga enhances menopausal women's quality of life, self-confidence and general wellbeing.

Vaze¹⁰ reported short-term practice of Yoga can decrease both psychological and physiological risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Meditation has been found to be associated with increased plasma melatonin level and improved sleep quality, particularly if done in the evening before rest. Cramer¹² in a systematic review found moderate evidence for short-term effectiveness of yoga for psychological symptoms in menopausal women. Yoga is recommended as an additional intervention for women who suffer from psychological complaints associated with menopause been shown to decrease anxiety, distress, blood pressure, pain, and fatigue. Jorge¹⁶, found that individuals who practiced yoga had lower levels of luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH). 12 weeks of yoga resulted in reduction in menopausal symptoms, depression symptoms, stress levels, notable improvements in total sleep and greater quality of life scores. Yoga promotes positive physical and psychological changes in post-menopausal women. Gangadharan²⁴ concludes, Yoga an alternative therapy, not only is safe and free from untoward effects but also could definitely be a choice for reducing menopausal symptoms and promoting quality of life. It reduces the severity of insomnia in menopausal women.

My experience with Yoga, post the menopause began about a year back. Always being overweight, my routine exercise was daily walk since college days but increasing knee pain was making this impossible. Cycling on road was dangerous and stationary cycle only exercised lower limbs. Our Yoga teacher has a one hour routine for us, which starts with Pranayam (Bhramari) Om chanting and then Suksham vyayam. We then do asanas and conclude with Pranayam (Bhramari, Anulom Viloma, Bhastrika, Kapalabhati) and mantra chanting (Gayatri mantra, Mahamrityunjaya mantra, Shanti mantra). Some of the asanas are done daily while others are altered. It's an evening class for 50+ years, I have noticed increased flexibility, enhanced reflexes and balance, increased exercise tolerance, better immunity (low seasonal cold cough). I am calm, cool, less irritable and have sound sleep. Some of the asanas are difficult to do but there is the flexibility to do the easier variations. For those who can't sit on floor there is the option of chair yoga. As most of us are 50+ years and doctors it has enhanced our comradeship, acceptance of the limits of our aging body, leading to a "feel good" status.

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SMILE POWER: EXPLORING THE MOOD-ALTERING EFFECTS OF ARTIFICIAL SMILES

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Smile as you read this. Notice any change in your mood.

We know that our mood influences and manifests as nonverbal behavior. But did you know our nonverbal behavior can also influence our emotional states?

The facial feedback hypothesis suggests the presence of a feedback loop between facial muscles and emotional experience which means that facial expressions can actually trigger an emotion. So, standing taller can make us feel more confident and creating an artificial smile can positively alter our mood.

While we can't claim with absolute confidence that smiling can make us joyous, we can say with considerable evidence that facial feedback, including feedback of muscles activated when smiling, can have a small effect on our emotional experiences in certain scenarios.

Nevertheless, what's the harm? All we're asking for is a smile.



For women navigating menopause, this simple act can be a powerful tool. Hormonal changes during this phase can bring mood swings and emotional turbulence. Embracing this "fake it till you make it" approach with a smile might offer a quick and easy way to uplift your spirits, especially on challenging days.

Not-So-Fun Fact

Research suggests that people who have had Botox injections experience a decrease in the strength of their emotional reactions compared to those who haven't. Can you guess why?

Hint: It has something to do with the fact that Botox paralyzes facial muscles.

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EMERGING FROM THE SHADOWS : A JOURNEY THROUGH MENOPAUSAL DEPRESSION TO PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

Dr. Bhavana Jayesh Sheth

Hon. Secretary – Bharuch Menopause Society



A perimenopausal woman may experience host of symptoms triggered by hormonal shifts - hot flashes, insomnia, mood fluctuations, depression, anxiety and stress. This may continue in the menopause period .

Studies link perimenopause and depression, but the nature of the connection is not clear.

The prevalence of depression in menopausal women worldwide is 35.6% [Indian population-42.47%].

The female hormones [Estrogen & Progesterone] also influence serotonin and norepinephrine, brain chemicals that promote feelings of well-being and happiness. When hormone levels drop, these chemicals also decrease, which contribute to increased irritability, anxiety and depression.

Sleep disturbance is also common , probably due to nocturnal hot flashes and this causes disturbance in health, tiredness, irritability, decreased concentration and mood swings .

A history of depression in the past makes it more likely to develop depression during perimenopause and menopause.

Such women during menopause transition need patience, self- confidence, family and spouse support and counselling from a menopause clinic expert.

Medical treatments

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and hypnosis
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)
- Antidepressants(Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)]

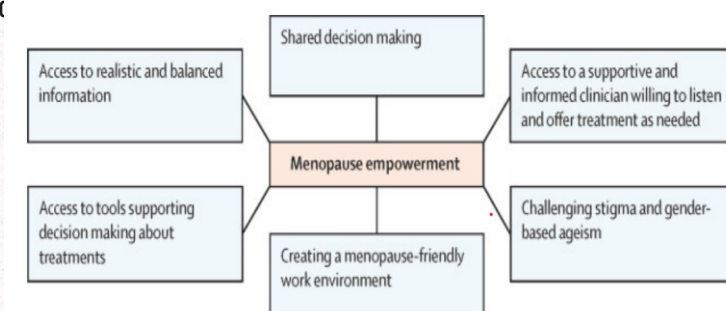
Supportive therapies

- Psychotherapy-may help with identifying the factors contributing to depression, such as life events or stress.
- “ME TIME”- Finding time with friends over a cup of tea, reading a book, going for a stroll, gardening or solving a puzzle can give a break from the pressures of life. Singing and dancing are other options.
- Mindful breathing exercises and yoga can also help. Speaking to other women online or in real life about the physical changes can benefit. Menopause Clinics are of utmost importance during such times especially when the woman is considering self harm or suicide.

Complimentary therapies

- Regular workouts, c

editation and pranayams.



Empowerment- WHO [World Health Organization] defines empowerment as an active process of gaining knowledge, confidence, and self-determination to self-manage health and make informed decisions about care. Rather than focusing on menopause as an endocrine deficiency, WHO proposes an empowerment model that recognizes factors modifying the experience, in which the patient is an expert in her own condition and the Menopause clinic doctor supports the patient to become an equal and active partner in managing her own care.

Such women can utilize their expertise in helping other women going through the same rough phase .

They can help others to be out of depression without medication. Instead of shying away they should become role models and this will be women empowerment !

Hence the need of the hour is dedicated menopause clinics which will change the remaining one third life of women suffering from menopausal depression and other symptoms.



FAMILY SUPPORT AND MENOPAUSAL MIND: NURTURING MENTAL WELLNESS THROUGH CONNECTION

Dr. Shashi Shrivastava

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Past President - Bhopal Menopause Society



“Family support and Menopausal Mind: Nurturing Mental Wellness through connection” Menopause can be a challenging time for many women, not just physically but also mentally.

The hormonal changes during this period can lead to mood swings, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. However, family support can play a crucial role in nurturing mental wellness during menopause.

- I remember the time when my energetic and multitasker mother suddenly faced a decline in her mental health during menopause. Out of nowhere, her mood swings became worse, she suffered episodes of anxiety and depression, and her brain felt like it was running on low battery.
- shown that women are two to four times more likely to experience major depression during menopause than at other times in their lives.
- Besides depression, anxiety, irritability, and brain fog can all become unwelcome companions during this transition.



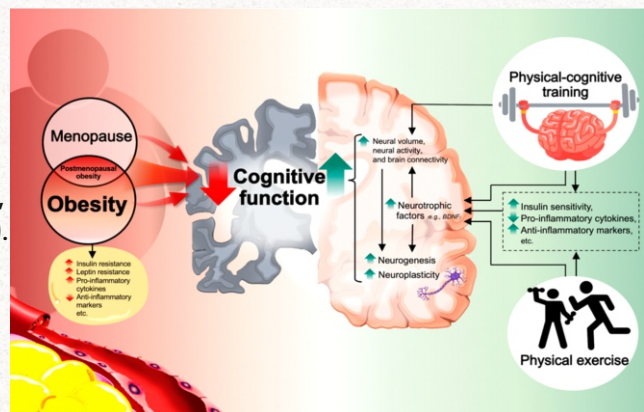
Dr Shashi Shrivastava

How Menopause Affects Mental Health?

During perimenopause our reproductive years come to an end. oestrogen and progesterone, hormones that play an important role in a woman's menstrual cycle, start to decline. Besides regulating periods, they're also key players in our brain chemistry, influencing neurotransmitters like serotonin (feel-good chemical). When oestrogen and progesterone levels fluctuate, serotonin production can take a hit, leading to mood swings, anxiety, and depression.

It is found that during menopause, there is a significant increase in the risk of mental health challenges. Along with depression, anxiety rates also climb, affecting many women in their menopausal transition stage.

Besides fluctuating hormones, another factor that can contribute to mental health problems is sleep disturbances. Sleep disruptions can leave us feeling drained and irritable, making it harder to cope with daily tasks.



Other Factors Influencing Mental Health in Midlife

Besides menopause, there are also other factors that can potentially impact our mental well-being. Women who have to care for children and elderly parents, as well as handle household chores on a regular basis, might experience an increase in their mental health conditions.

The stress of achieving higher goals quickly in the workplace because of the pressure of ageism can also hamper the mental health.

Conversation Worth Having

It is absolutely crucial to have open and honest conversations about menopause and mental health. The idea of suffering alone needs to change!

By talking about it, we can show others they're not alone and normalize the emotional aspects of menopause. Sharing our experiences can empower other women to seek help.





How Family Support Helps

Emotional Support: Having a supportive family can provide a safe space to express feelings and concerns. This emotional support can help reduce stress and anxiety.

Understanding and Patience: Family members who understand the challenges of menopause can be more patient and empathetic, which can make a significant difference in a woman's mental well-being

Encouraging healthy lifestyle choices

Open and honest communication about what one is experiencing can help in finding effective coping strategies and treatments.

Conclusion

Menopause is a natural phase of life, and with the right support and strategies, women can navigate it more comfortably.

[Family support, understanding, and open communication are key to nurturing mental wellness during this time](#)



REVIVING PASSIONS: USING FORGOTTEN HOBBIES TO ALLEVIATE STRESS DURING MENOPAUSE

Dr. Nalini Sharma

Professor, ObGyn Geetanjali Medical College and Hospital
Secretary, Udaipur Menopause Society



"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."
- Maya Angelou.

Menopause can be a challenging transition but offers an opportunity to rediscover and embrace forgotten passions. Reviving old hobbies isn't just about nostalgia—it's a powerful tool for managing menopausal stress and symptoms naturally. Whether it's getting your hands dirty in the garden, creating art that expresses your emotions, or picking up that badminton racket that's been gathering dust, these activities release endorphins—nature's stress relievers. Reading transports you to different worlds while crafting engages your mind and keeps those creative juices flowing.



Travel adventures, even small ones, can reignite your sense of wonder. Laughter truly is medicine—watching comedies or meeting old friends for coffee can lift your spirits immensely. These activities aren't just pastimes; they're powerful tools for emotional wellbeing during menopause.



By reconnecting with activities that once brought you joy, you're not just managing stress—you're rediscovering parts of yourself that life's demands may have overshadowed.



DOES THE MENOPAUSAL MIND BELONG TO THE PSYCHIATRIST'S DOMAIN?

DR BIRVA DESAI MODH

Consultant Psychiatrist

Deaddiction and child & adolescent mental health specialist

Founder at Saarthi Mental Health Centre, Surat.



Absolutely!

Ladies, gents, and everyone else reading this, let's talk about a hot topic—literally. Menopause. You know, that phase when a woman's body decides it's time to spice things up, but not in the way anyone asked for. Hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings—sounds like a party, right? But behind all the physical drama, there's something even more interesting happening upstairs in the brain. And guess what? This is where we psychiatrists get to play our parts.

Now, you might wonder, "Is menopause really a job for the psychiatrist?" And to that, I say, "If the mind is involved, then yes, of course!" You see, menopause doesn't just mess with hormones; it throws the entire mental circus out of order. Picture this: anxiety, irritability, foggy thinking, mood swings that make a rollercoaster look like a kid's ride, and sometimes, a full-on identity crisis. Fun, right?

The Mental Menopause Maze

Imagine your brain is like an office, and estrogen is the boss who's suddenly quit without warning. Now, the employees (aka neurotransmitters) are running around like headless chickens, not knowing what to do. Serotonin, the one that keeps you happy, is now sulking in a corner. Dopamine, who usually gives you that zest for life, is taking too many coffee breaks. And cortisol, the stress manager, is yelling at everyone for no reason. It's a mess!

This hormonal chaos can lead to a host of mental health symptoms. Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, and even sleep disturbances can come knocking. And unlike hot flashes, you can't just fan these problems away.

"It's All in Your Head"—The Misunderstood Line

Often, women are told, "It's just menopause, it's all in your head." And while that's not entirely wrong, it's also not the most helpful response. The truth is, what's happening in your head during menopause is very real, and it's our job as psychiatrists to help sort it out. Whether it's cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness, medication, or just a safe space to vent about the craziness of it all, we've got tools in our toolbox.

Why the Psychiatrist?

While the gynecologists are the best people to help someone with the physical problems associated with menopause; we, the mental health professionals, are here to catch the mental health ones before they hit the ground. Psychiatrists and mental health professionals understand the complex interplay between hormones and neurotransmitters, and how these changes affect mood, sleep, and cognition. Plus, we're really good listeners—just don't expect us to bring snacks!

Bottom Line: Don't Suffer in Silence

Menopause is not just a "woman's issue"—it's a mental health issue too. So, if you find yourself feeling like a stranger in your own mind during this time, don't hesitate to talk to a mental health professional. Your mind deserves as much care as your body, especially when life's natural transitions make it feel anything but natural.

So, is the menopausal mind in the psychiatrist's domain? You bet it is. And we're here, coffee in hand, ready to help you navigate this wild ride with a little less drama and a lot more peace.

References:

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COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CBT) FOR PERIMENOPAUSAL WELL-BEING

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Perimenopause is a transitional phase before menopause, where women often experience a wide range of physical, emotional, and psychological changes. Typically starting in the late 30s or early 40s, symptoms can range from hot flashes, mood swings, sleep disturbances, and feelings of anxiety or depression. While hormone fluctuations play a significant role in these changes, the psychological impact of perimenopause is just as crucial, often leaving women feeling overwhelmed, irritable, or even disconnected from their sense of self. Emotional control is often impacted and along with health and emotional difficulties lifestyle pressures also exacerbate the situation. Managing careers, caring for aging parents, or dealing with children leaving home can amplify stress levels. Amid these challenges, many women may feel isolated or misunderstood, as societal conversations around menopause are still laden with stigma and misconceptions. Yet, there's growing recognition that mental health support during this time can make a significant difference. This is where Cognitive Behavioural Therapy comes in.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) has emerged as an effective, evidence-based approach to help women navigate this complex phase with greater emotional resilience and well-being.

What is CBT?

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is a structured, short-term form of psychotherapy that focuses on identifying and changing negative thought patterns and behaviours. It operates on the principle that our thoughts influence our feelings and actions. By challenging irrational or unhelpful beliefs, individuals can develop healthier coping mechanisms, leading to improved emotional well-being.

How CBT Supports Perimenopausal Women

- 1. Managing Anxiety and Mood Swings:** During perimenopause, many women experience heightened anxiety and sudden mood swings. CBT helps women recognize the triggers and patterns of their thoughts that lead to these emotional shifts. For example, feeling overwhelmed by a hot flash during a work meeting can spiral into anxiety about one's competence or visibility. CBT techniques help break down this chain reaction, allowing women to manage their symptoms with a calmer mindset.
- 2. Improving Sleep Quality:** Sleep disturbances are another common issue during perimenopause, often linked to hormonal changes and night sweats. CBT incorporates strategies like sleep hygiene, relaxation techniques, and cognitive restructuring to reduce insomnia and promote healthier sleep patterns.
- 3. Coping with Physical Symptoms:** CBT is also effective in helping women cope with the physical symptoms of perimenopause. For instance, learning mindfulness-based techniques can reduce the severity of hot flashes and help women regain a sense of control over their bodies.

A Holistic Approach to Wellness

In addition to CBT, lifestyle changes such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and mindfulness practices can complement therapy to enhance overall well-being during perimenopause. Combining these strategies helps women create a robust toolkit for managing symptoms and promoting mental health. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by the changes, CBT empowers women to take charge of their mental health, leading to a more balanced and fulfilling life.



IS MENOPAUSE ELDER SISTER OF PUBERTY ?

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Puberty is celebrated, menopause is stigma. Both these milestones in womanhood share traits as sisters do but both are somewhere different. The irony is, one is welcomed with open arms and other is abandoned.

Both puberty and menopause are physiological phenomena reflected by mental and physical changes in female's body and life. Puberty is awakening of reproductive hormones and menopause is winding down. During puberty a girl gets most of the support and guidance from family and society. In fact in some parts of our country there is formal ceremony to celebrate 'Menarche'. But menopause is devoid of the attention and cooperation it deserves. In most of cases its symptoms are suppressed by female herself and the society.

In puberty the girl presents with mood swings, often expresses herself by showing tantrums and even goes cranky sometimes. She has so much to fantasize about her future personal and social life. In contrast a women going through menopause bears similar symptoms and often deals with emptiness and loneliness psychologically and socially. A women dealing with menopause also deserves celebration of this phase and be taken as retirement from reproductive functions. There should be awareness about the common symptoms and easy accessibility of resources to deal with them. Both should be dealt with same acceptance and endurance.

The Elder sister cares for her younger ones but she also deserves care.



Finally Let's End This



SHE DOESN'T MIND THE MENOPAUSE NOR DOES HER GOLDEN HEART

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The crystal earrings dangle and attempt to touch, slopes and folds of skin of her neck, every time she make a move.

I confess with all my heart , I want to do that too.

Like the fine lines stretched on a sand beach , her beautiful eyes, narrate the stories she lived. The days she was overjoyed, the nights she just couldn't sleep .

The tiny pink corners of her lips are hiding , curled up and unseen While she's deeply lost in her thoughts I just hope she laughs in between.

Totally unapologetic, not so straight, at times neat at times messy, her grey hair. The fact only she gets to choose when to colour them is coz she keeps herself without a layer.

She's what she's, and now at this juncture of life ,she doesn't really care.

The world with all its weirdness and wilderness has never been totally fair.

Words thriving in a deep ocean inside ,eagerly waiting for their turn.

She no longer allows them so easy ,some old battles did the brunt.

Even in a mean world , she emerged as a strong warrior fighting the odds. One can only fall for her beauty, kindness , and embrace her forever golden heart.



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Our Team



Mental Health & Menopause