

Perimenopausal Depression Among Women in the Community

Agnes Karunya. E¹, John Wesley²

¹Staff Nurse, Christian Medical College, Vellore, India.

²M.Sc.(N) Tutor, Department of Community, College of Nursing, Christian Medical College, Vellore, Chittoor campus, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh, India.

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Perimenopausal depression is a significant public health concern affecting an estimated 20 to 30% of women during the menopause transition, a critical life stage marked by hormonal fluctuations, physical symptoms, and emotional changes. Despite its prevalence and impact on women's quality of life, perimenopausal depression remains under-recognized, under-treated, and under-studied. The complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors contributing to Perimenopausal Depression necessitates a comprehensive investigation to inform effective prevention and treatment strategies.

OBJECTIVE: To assess the prevalence and impact of perimenopausal depression among women in the community, and to provide awareness regarding perimenopausal depression through health education.

METHOD: A cross-sectional study has been conducted among women aged 40 to 50 years in Chittoor District, A. P. Purposive sampling method was used and the tool was called **Meno-D Questionnaire**. This questionnaire is taken from a study 'Development and validation of a new rating scale for perimenopausal depression-the Meno-D' Adequate permission is obtained from the author in order to use this tool in the study. The tool has two sections, section-A contains socioeconomic details and biophysical parameters and section-B contains various aspects of perimenopausal depression like low energy, paranoid thinking, irritability, self-esteem, isolation, anxiety, etc.

RESULTS: The findings of the study are

- Majority of the women 27(54%) of them had done high schooling
- Majority of the women 28(56%) of them were homemakers
- Half of the women 25(50%) of them had prehypertension.
- More than half of them 29(58%) of them had moderate weight gain.
- The overall percentage of Perimenopausal Depression is only 14.3% which is remarkably less.

CONCLUSION: The study findings gave us an insight into perimenopausal depression and its impact among women in the community. From the various aspects of perimenopausal depression women were found to have moderate weight gain and all other aspects are remarkably less compared to the previous studies. This study bought an awareness among women regarding perimenopausal depression.

Keywords: perimenopause, depression, knowledge

Introduction

Perimenopausal Depression is a type of depression that can affect women during perimenopause, the transition to menopause when menstrual cycles become irregular. A 2021 meta-analysis of studies found that 42.7% of perimenopausal and that women are twice as likely as men to develop depression during times of sudden hormonal changes, such as perimenopause, puberty, postpartum, and their cycle. This is because estrogen is a powerful regulator of brain function, changes in estradiol can cause dysphoric mood states². Transition to menopause and its changing hormonal milieu are strongly associated with the new onset of depressed mood among women with no history of depression³. Information about the risk of depression in midlife women is clinically important because of the diminished function and significant disability that accompany this common disorder and because depression is associated with other health limiting conditions that increase in midlife such as cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome and osteoporosis⁴. The majority of women manage to adjust to these changes and cope well with the shift from reproductive to non-reproductive life. However, burdensome physical and psychological symptoms are present during perimenopausal⁵.

Subjects and methods

Using a quantitative approach, a descriptive study was undertaken for a period a one week in rural and urban areas of Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. A total of 50 women of age group between 40 and 50 were included in the study. The tool used to assess the level of Perimenopausal Depression was called **Meno-D Questionnaire**. This questionnaire was taken from a study 'Development and validation of a new rating scale for perimenopausal depression-the Meno-D'⁶. Adequate permission was obtained from the author in order to use this tool in the study.

The questionnaire consists of 2 sections. Section-A contains socio-demographic variables like age, gender, marital status, education, occupation and history of any psychiatric illness, present and previous weight. Section-B contains various aspects of perimenopausal depression like low energy, paranoid thinking, irritability, self-esteem, isolation, anxiety, etc. The questionnaire is a form of rating scale where a score from 0 to 4 is opted by the participant. 0 refers to absence of any form of depressive sign and 4 refers to an extreme situation. The participant was given liberty to circle all those relevant pertaining to her circumstance. All the scores will be summed up to form total score. The total score in the entire questionnaire is 48, whereas 20-24 was considered as participant having Mild Perimenopausal Depression; 25-32 denotes Moderate Perimenopausal Depression and 33-48 denotes Severe Perimenopausal Depression. The participant was interviewed and scores were recorded accordingly by the investigator after obtaining informed consent for those who cannot comprehend the questionnaire.

Results and discussion

Data was analyzed using MS. Excel and was presented as tables, bar graphs and pie chart. The findings are presented in the following order.

Table-1 Distribution of socio-demographic variables of women from selected communities (N= 50)

Table-1 reveals the participant information. Majority of the women are educated up to high school 27(54%), only 1(2%) have done higher secondary and 28(56%) are homemakers.

S. No	VARIABLES		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.	Education	No schooling	13	26
		Primary	8	16
		High school	27	54
		Higher secondary	1	2
		Under graduate	1	2
2.	Occupation	Homemaker	28	56
		Skilled	5	10
		Semiskilled	17	34

Figure-1 Distribution of perimenopausal depression among women with no schooling and learned from communities (N=50)

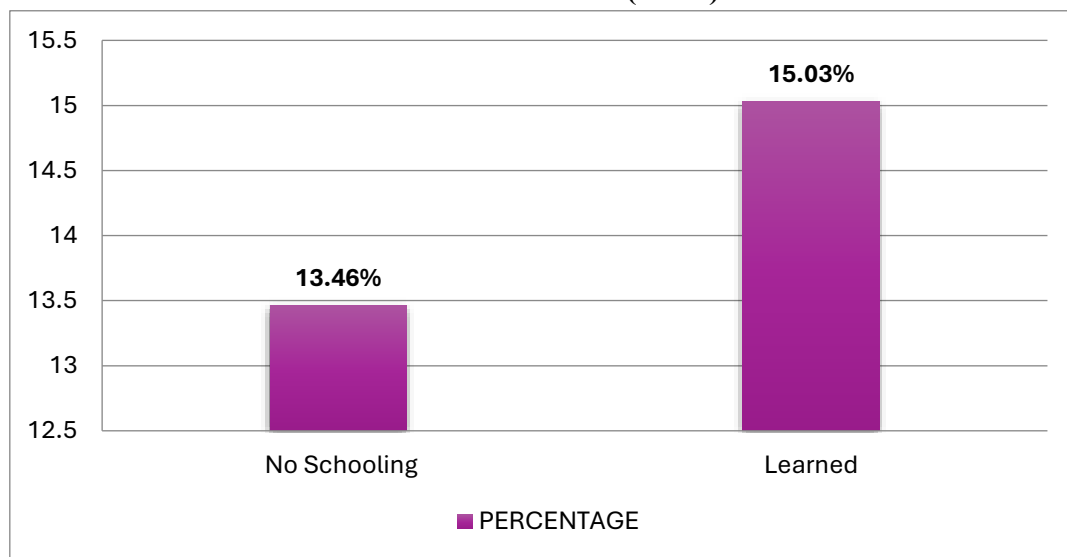


Figure-1 shows that learned people (15.03%) show more depressive signs: Han et al., (2022) Factors associated with the high susceptibility to depression of women during perimenopause], shows that high susceptibility to depression of perimenopausal women may be related to lower educational level ⁷ and this contradicts with the present study.

Figure-2 Distribution of perimenopausal depression among homemakers and working group (N=50)

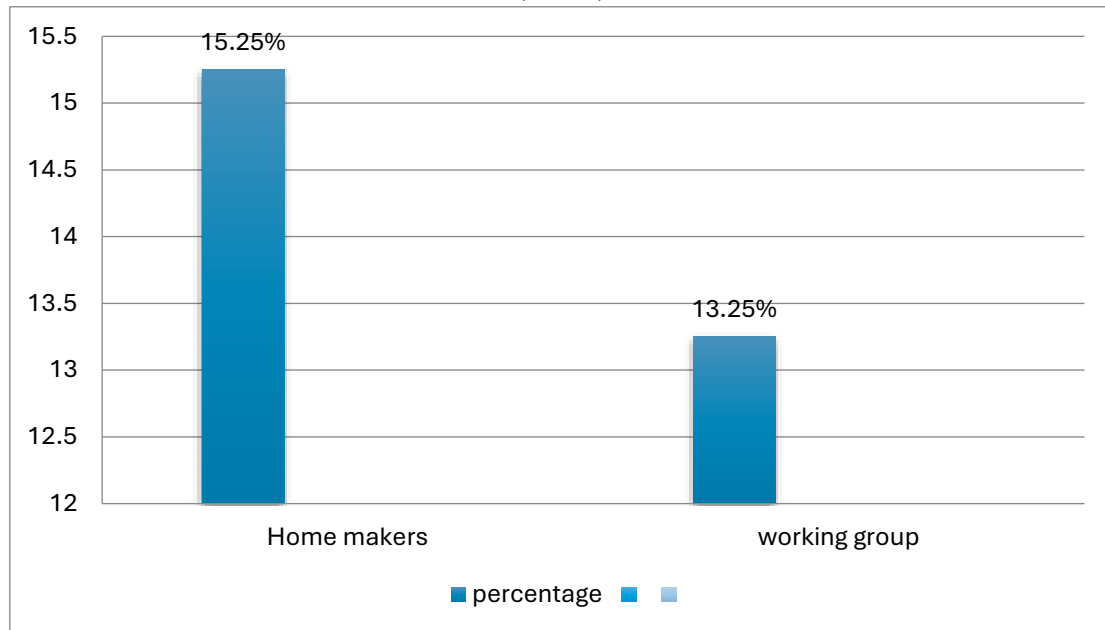


Figure-2 reveals that homemakers (15.25%) show more depressive signs than working group. Andrea Huseh-Zosel, et al (2014) Socioeconomic differences in the menopausal experience of Chinese women, shows that non-white collar occupations are likely to experience bothersome depression symptoms and this is similar to the present study. The present study shows that homemakers (15.25%) show more depressive signs than working women. Due to lack of family support and lack of education most of them ended up being homemakers.

Table-2 Distribution of biophysical parameter of women from selected communities (N=50)

Table-2 shows that 25(50%) women have pre-hypertension, 4(8%) have stage-1 hypertension and 29(58%) of women have gained weight. Dongshan Zhu et al., (2018) An international pooled analysis of 11 prospective studies, reports that almost 39% women undergoing menopausal transition are either overweight or obese and this is similar to the present study¹⁰

S. No	VARIABLES		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.	Blood pressure	Normal (<120)	21	42
		Prehypertension (120-139)	25	50
		Stage 1(140-159)	4	8
2.	Weight gain	Yes	29	58
		No	21	42

Figure-3 Distribution of blood pressure among working group (N=22)

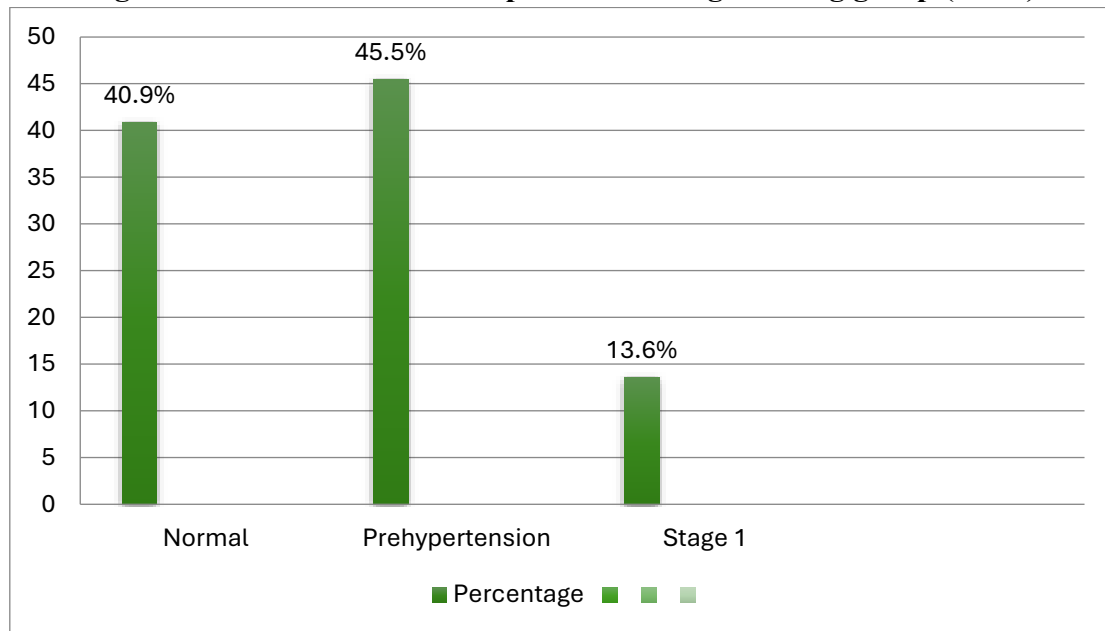


Figure-3 shows that among working women 45.5% have pre-hypertension and 13.6% have stage-1 hypertension. still et al., (2020) [association of psychological symptoms, blood pressure, and menopausal status], that found perimenopausal women with reported higher level of depressive symptoms had higher systolic blood pressure (57%).⁹and this coincides with the present study.

Figure-4 Distribution of perimenopausal depression among urban and rural women (N=50)

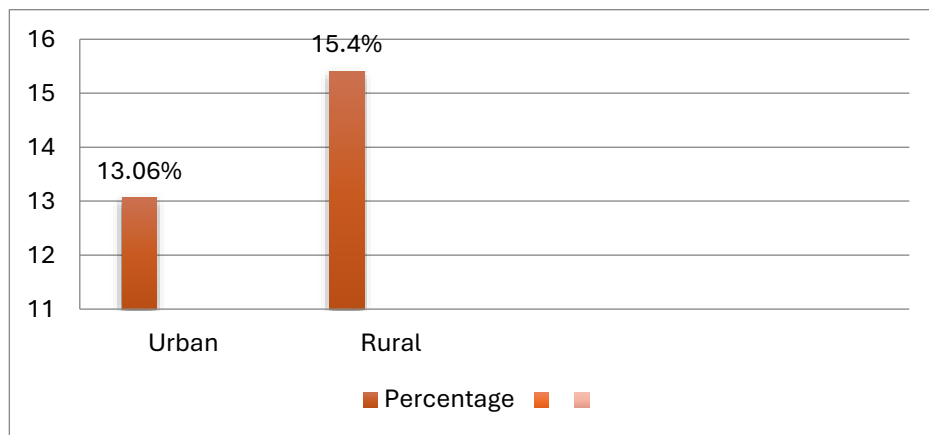


Figure-4 reveals that woman from rural communities 207(15.4%) show more depressive signs than women from urban communities.

Figure-5 Distribution of different elements of perimenopausal depression (N=50)

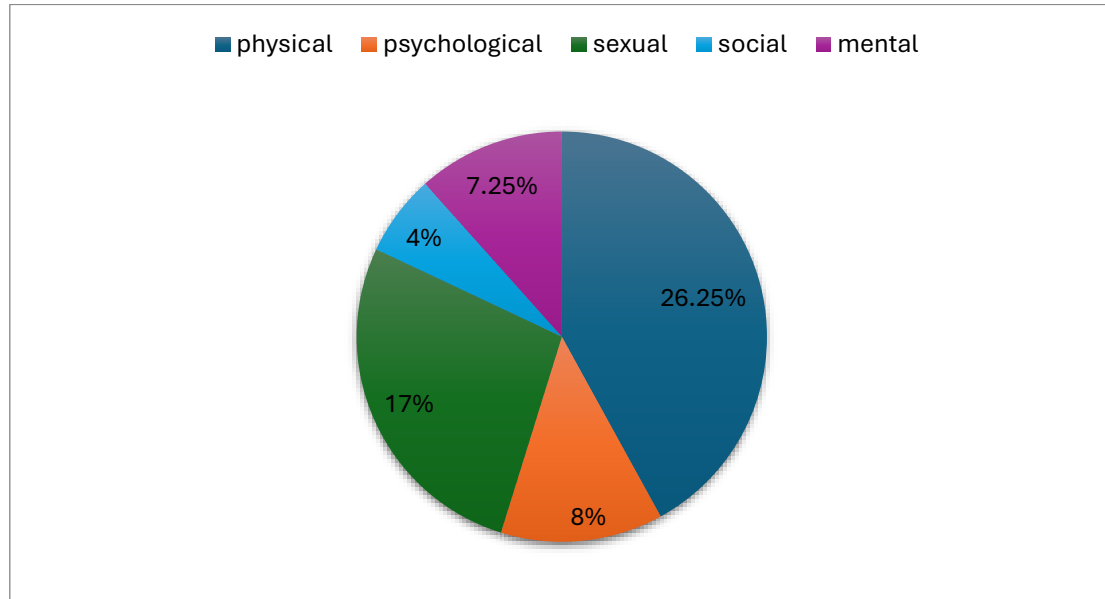


Figure-5 shows that women have 26.25% of physical, 8% psychological, 17% sexual signs, 4% social and 7.25% of mental depressive signs. The analysis was done by breaking the questionnaire into various aspects such as physical, psychological, sexual, social and mental. Avis et al., (1994) A longitudinal analysis of the association between menopause and depression, reports the overall score percentage of 91.2%¹¹ and this contradicts with the present study. The present study reveals the overall score percentage of 14.3% which is considerably less.

Conclusion

The present study findings gave us an insight into perimenopausal depression and its impact among women in the community. From the various aspects of perimenopausal depression women were found to have moderate weight gain and all other aspects are remarkably less compared to the previous studies. This study bought an awareness among women regarding perimenopausal depression.

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