

Perceived Body Image and Severity of Menopausal Symptoms among Postmenopausal Women Visiting Gynae OPD of a Tertiary Care Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab.

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Abstract

Menopause, a natural biological process, brings about significant hormonal changes that can impact various aspects of a woman's physical and psychological well-being, including her body image. This study seeks to understand how these changes, specifically the severity of menopausal symptoms, may influence women's perception of their own image for her body. The present study aimed to assess the perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women. A quantitative, non-experimental descriptive correlational study was conducted on 100 postmenopausal women visiting Gynae OPD of D.M.C&Hospital, Ludhiana. Purposive sampling was adopted and data were collected using the Structured Perceived Body image scale and Standardized Menopause Rating scale through interview and self report. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (SPSS Version 2025). 100 postmenopausal women aged 53.57 ± 3.70 years old, participated in the study. which revealed that majority (55.0%), had altered perception of body image with mean score of 61.78 ± 6.59 , while (45.0%) had normal perception of body image with mean score 36.26 ± 8.13 . As per severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women majority (67.0%,) experienced moderate menopausal symptoms with mean score of 21.70 ± 1.95 and **significant weak positive correlation** was found between perceived body image and severity of Menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women ($r=.28$; $p=0.004$). The study concluded that severity of menopausal symptoms significantly impact the perceived body image of postmenopausal women. Therefore, body image should not be overlooked during postmenopausal care.

Keywords: Postmenopausal women, Perceived body image, Menopausal symptoms

INTRODUCTION

Body image is a multidimensional concept that is commonly defined as a person's perception, thoughts, attitudes and feelings regarding their own body¹. It is one of the main elements of an individual personality as a component of mental health, body image distinguish itself by focusing on self-perceived appearance, attractiveness and body functioning and by encompassing the emotional importance attributed to one's own appearance and the level of confidence and acceptance they feel toward their body.²

Menopause is defined as the reproductive condition after 12 consecutive months of amenorrhea, as a result of the complex hormonal changes that accompany the reduction in ovarian follicles³⁻⁴. It is a natural process occurring during middle age (40-55 years old) and most commonly early 50s, Although it can be

induced through medical intervention. Overall, it is critical period in women's life which is associated with significant physical and mental changes⁵. The menopausal transition is a wider term that also encompasses the stages surrounding menopause, including peri and post menopause, during which women may experience irregular menses, hormonal fluctuations and various types of menopausal symptoms (e.g. hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, mood swings, vaginal dryness, frequent urination etc)⁶.

Various viewpoints have been expressed on the effects of menopause on the quality of life. Some have described the experiences of women and the positive aspects of menopause, including having more freedom, personal growth, achievements and gaining competency. On the other hand, there are negative aspects of an existential nature and negative physical changes, which include psychological factors, lifestyle changes, and body image concerns, inter-personal relationship and roles and socio-cultural factors should not be ignored.

In our health system, women of the reproductive age group are given more importance but unfortunately, the postmenopausal women in both the urban and the rural areas are neglected. In some women, these symptoms are so severe that may affect their social and individual lives but still less attention is being paid towards them.

The knowledge regarding the menopausal symptoms is essential for every postmenopausal woman to improve the perceived body image. Postmenopausal women found a high prevalence of menopausal symptoms. This infers that health education among women at the primary and secondary health care level can improve the perceived level of image of the postmenopausal women and would help them to manage their several menopausal symptoms which further would improve their overall quality of life.

Problem statement

“A study to assess the perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women visiting Gynae OPD of a tertiary care hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab.”

Aim

To assess perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.

Objectives:

1. To assess the perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.
2. To find out the relationship between perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.
3. To determine the association of perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women with selected sociodemographic variables.
4. To prepare and disseminate IEC material [pamphlets] on body image and menopausal symptoms.

Operational Definitions

Perceived body image: It refers to the consideration and interpretation of a postmenopausal woman about her physical appearance in terms of changes in hair & face, lower limb, upper limb after achieving the menopause as assessed by structured perceived body image scale.

Menopausal symptoms: It refers to the physical, psychological & genital features experienced by postmenopausal women as assessed by standardized Menopause rating scale by (Heinemann et al., 2003)

Post menopausal women: It refers to the women aged between 45-60 years who did not have menstrual cycle from last 1 year.

Materials and methods

Quantitative research approach & non-experimental descriptive correlational research design was used to assess the perceived body image & severity of menopausal symptoms and also assessing the existing relationship between them among postmenopausal women without manipulating any variable. Data was collected from a sample of 100 postmenopausal women who had achieved it from last 1 year visiting Gynae OPD of a tertiary care hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab by using purposive sampling technique. Responses were collected by self-report method using Structured Perceived Body image scale and Standardized Menopause rating scale (Heinemenn et al., 2003). Quantitative data was obtained by using interview & self-report technique. Data was tabulated and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (SPSS version 25).

Inclusion criteria: Post menopausal women who

- have achieved menopause from last 1 year.
- were available at the time of data collection.

Exclusion criteria: Post menopausal women who were

- taking Hormonal replacement therapy
- not willing to participate

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was undertaken from Institutional Ethical committee. Informed written consent was taken from the subjects prior to data collection and assured that their information would be kept confidential. Subjective information sheet was also provided as per the language ability of subjects to explain the purpose, procedure and benefits of the study.

Analysis and interpretation of data

Analysis and interpretation of the data was done in accordance with the objectives of the study using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage distribution, graphs and inferential statistics (ANOVA, correlational coefficient and t- test) at 0.05 level of significance & categorized under different sections.

SECTION - I (A)

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of postmenopausal women as per their Socio-demographic variables.

S. No.	Variables	N=100	f
1.	Age (in years)*		
	45-50		27
	51-55		45
	56-60		28
2.	Educational Status		
	Illiterate		2
	Elementary		52
	Secondary		28

	Graduate and above		18
3.	Occupational status Working Non- working/ home maker If yes, specify (n=23) Clerk Manager Professor/Teacher Social worker Staff nurse		23 77 f (%) 3(13) 1(4.3) 10(42.47) 6(26) 3(13)
4.	Dietary habits Vegetarian Non- Vegetarian Lacto ova vegetarian		57 35 8
5.	Socio-economic Status (According to Kuppuswamy socioeconomic scale 2024) Upper Upper middle Upper lower Lower middle Lower		2 28 25 45 0

***Mean age (in years) =53.57± 3.70**

Table 1 depicts the frequency and percentage distribution of postmenopausal women as per their socio-demographic variables which showed that (45%) of postmenopausal women with age group of 51 -55 years, followed by (28%) had age group 56-60 years, and only (27%) had age group of 45-50 years and the mean age 53.57± 3.70 years, Regarding educational status, more than half (52%) studied up to elementary level, (28%) studied up to secondary education, (18%) were graduate and above and only (2%) were illiterate. As per occupational status, majority (77%) of postmenopausal women were non-working/homemakers followed by (23%) postmenopausal women were working and out of those,10(42.47%) were professor/teacher, 6(26%) social worker, followed by,3(13%) were clerk and 3(13%) were staff nurse only 1(4.3%) were manager. More than half (57%) were vegetarian, followed by (35%) were non-vegetarian and only few (8%) were lacto-ova vegetarian. As per Kuppuswamy socio-economic status scale (2024), (45%) postmenopausal women belonged to lower middle class, followed by (28%) from upper middle class, (25%) were from upper lower class and only (2%) from upper class.

SECTION - I (B)

CLINICAL PROFILE

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of postmenopausal women as per their clinical variables.

S. No.	Variables	N=100	f (%)
1	BMI (in kg/m²) as per WHO Underweight<18.5 Normal weight 18.5-24.9		3 46

	Overweight 25.0-29.9 Obesity class1(30.0-34.9) Obesity class II(35.0-39.9) Obesity class($\geq$ 40.0)	51 0 0 0
2.	Do you have children Yes No No. of Children(n=96) 1 2 3 4	96 4 f(%) 19(19.7) 50(52) 21(21.8) 7(7.2)
3.	Family history of gynecological illness Yes No	4 96
4.	Any Medical history Yes No Medical problem (n=41) * Diabetes Hypertension Thyroid Arthritis	41 59 f(%) 20(48.7) 21(51.2) 6(14.6) 7(17)
5.	Any Surgical history Yes No Surgery undergone(n=21) * Cholecystectomy c-secon Angioplasty Appendectomy	21 79 f (%) 12(57.1) 16(76.1) 3(14.2) 2(9.5)
6.	History of substance abuse No	100
7.	Any previous hospitalization Yes No	23 77
8.	H/o diagnosed Psychiatric Illness Yes No	5 95
9.	Kind of Lifestyle Sedentary lifestyle Moderately active Active lifestyle	8 77 15

10.	Menstrual profile	
a)	Age at menarche (in years) ^{##}	
	13-14	80
	15-16	20
b)	Menstrual flow (No of pads /day)	
	Average (<4 pads/day)	69
	Heavy(>5pads/day)	31
c)	Menstrual cycle	
	28 days	71
	less than 28 days	29
d)	Duration of menses	
	3 days	22
	More than 3 days	78
e)	Age at menopause (in yrs) [#]	
	44-48	11
	49-53	46
	54-59	43

**Multiple responses*

##Mean age at menarche=14.24±3.2

#Mean age at menopause =52.54± 3.64

Table 2 Clinical profile which showed maximum (51%) were overweight BMI, (96%) had children, (96%) did not have any family history, (59%) did not have any medical history, maximum (79%) not have any surgical history followed Regarding substance abuse, all (100%) postmenopausal women had no history of substance abuse. As per previous hospitalization, maximum (77%) never got admitted ,history of psychiatric illness majority (95%) didn't have any history ,lifestyle (77%) were moderately active followed (80.0%) of the postmenopausal women had their menarche between the age group of 13-14 years, with mean age of menarche 14.24±3.2, Majority (69.0%) had experienced average menstrual flow,(71%) of had menstrual cycle length of 28 days, Regarding duration of menses, (78%) had duration more than three days (46%) reported menopause at age group of 49 -53 years with mean age of menopause as 52.54± 3.64.

SECTION- II

Table 3: Frequency, percentage distribution and mean score of perceived body image among postmenopausal women

N=100

S. No.	Perceived Body image	Score	f/(%)	Mean ± SD	Mean %
1.	Normal	20-50	45	36.26±8.13	36.26
2.	Altered	≥51	55	61.78±6.59	61.78

overall Mean±SD =60.46±8.13

Minimum score =20

Maximum score=100

Table 4: Frequency, percentage distribution and mean score of severity of Menopausal Symptoms among Postmenopausal Women.

N=100

S. No.	Severity of menopausal symptoms	Score	f(%)	Mean ± SD	Mean %
1.	Mild	10-18	22	16.04±2.14	36.45
2.	Moderate	19-27	67	21.70±1.95	49.31
3.	Severe	28-36	7	32.0±2.94	32.0
4.	Very severe	37-44	4	21.92±92	49.81

Minimum score:0

overall Mean±SD=21.9±5.7

Maximum score:44

Table 4(a): Frequency, percentage distribution and mean score of severity of Menopausal symptoms (as per domains) among Postmenopausal Women.

N=100

S. No.	Severity of menopausal symptoms	Score	f(%)	Mean ± SD	Mean %
1.	Physical				
	Mild	2-4	12	3.72±.46	8.45%
	Moderate	5-7	49	5.95±.78	13.52%
	Severe	8-14	39	9.92±1.91	22.54%
2.	Psychological				
	Mild	2-4	6	3.66±.81	8.31%
	Moderate	5-7	39	6.25±.75	14.20%
	Severe	8-14	54	9.68±1.76	22%
	Very severe	15-16	1	16.0±.	36.36%
3.	Urogenital				
	Mild	2-3	6	2.83±.40	6.43%
	Moderate	4-6	46	5.08±.83	11.54%
	Severe	7-10	43	8.0±1.04	18.18%
	Very severe	11-12	5	11.80±.44	26.81%

Minimum score:00

Mean±SD=21.9± 5.7

Maximum score:44

Table 5: Relationship Between Perceived Body Image and Severity of Menopausal symptoms among Postmenopausal Women.

N=100

Variables	Mean±SD	Mean %	r
Perceived Body image	60.46±8.13	60.4%	r=.28

Severity of Menopausal symptoms	21.9±5.7	49.77%	p=0.004*
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Score of Perceived Body image:

*significant≤0.05

Maximum score=100

Minimum score =20

Score of Severity of menopausal Symptoms:

Maximum score=44

Minimum score =00

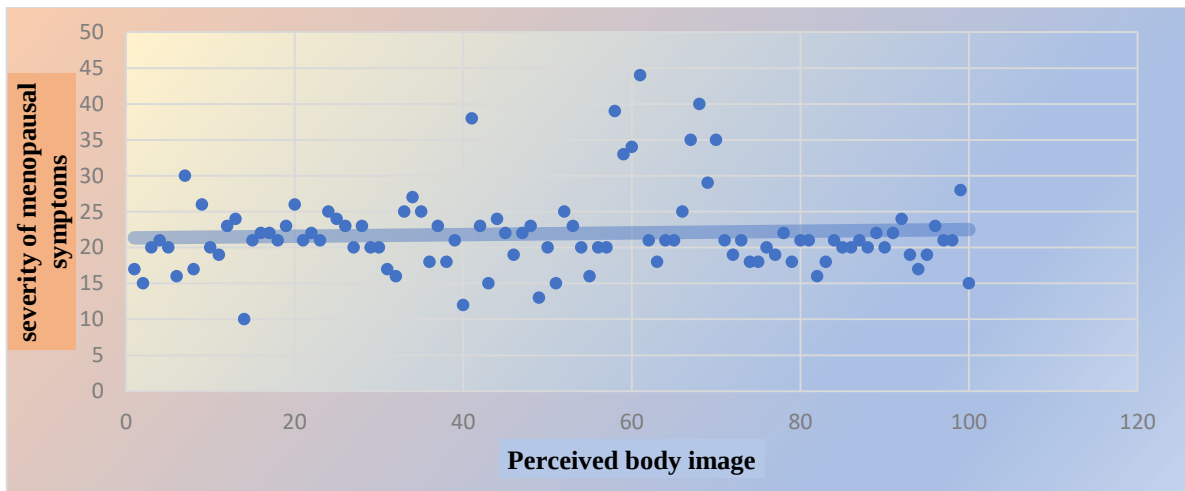


Figure 6: scatter diagram showing correlation between perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women

Table 5 represents the relationship between perceived body image and severity of Menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women. The mean score of perceived body image among postmenopausal women was 60.46 ± 8.13 (50.3%) and the mean score of severity of menopausal symptoms score was 21.9 ± 5.7 (49.77%). Weak positive correlation was found between perceived body image and severity of Menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women ($r=.28$; $p=0.004$). It showed that the perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms were related to each other which infers that the perceived body image effects the severity of menopausal symptoms.

Table 6: Association of perceived body image with their sociodemographic Variables.

N=100

Sociodemographic variables	n	Mean±SD	F/t df p
Age (in years)*			
45-50	27	51.527±13.7	F=.18
51-55	45	50.2±15.3	df=97
56-60	28	49.10±14.9	p=.82 ^{NS}

Educational status			
Illiterate	2	50.00±22.62	F =1.38
Elementary	52	53.07±13.47	df= 96
Secondary	28	47.85±16.67	p=.253 ^{NS}
Graduate and above	18	46.11±13.74	
Occupational status			
Working	23	47.60±12.99	t=1.00
Non- working/ home maker	77	51.10±15.14	df=98
			p=.319 ^{NS}
Dietary habits			
Vegetarian	57	46.29±15.33	F=5.70
Non-vegetarian	35	56.42±11.19	df= 97
Lacto ova vegetarian	8	52.0±15.52	P=.005*
Socio-economic Status (According to Kuppaswamy socioeconomic scale 2024)			
Upper	2	47.05±19.78	F=.921
Upper middle	25	48.42±13.85	df=96
Upper lower	25	54.44±14.07	p=.438 ^{NS}
Lower middle	45	49.31±15.41	

***Mean age (in years) =53.57± 3.70**

Significant $p \leq 0.05^*$

NS (non-significant) $p > 0.05$

Maximum score: 100

Minimum score: 20

Table 6 depicts the association of perceived body image with their sociodemographic variables. which showed that according to age the higher perceived body image mean score (51.52 ± 13.7) was found in the age group of 45–50 years. In relation to educational status, higher perceived body image mean score (53.07 ± 13.47) was found in postmenopausal women with elementary education level. As per occupational status, higher perceived body image mean score (51.10 ± 15.14) was found in non-working/home maker. Regarding dietary habits, maximum perceived body image mean score (56.42 ± 11.19) was found in postmenopausal women were non- vegetarian As per socioeconomic status, higher perceived body image mean score (54.44 ± 14.07) was found in upper lower class.

Therefore, inference can be drawn that perceived body image was found to be significantly associated with dietary habits only, rest all variables had non-significant association.

Table 7: Association Between Severity of Menopausal Symptoms with their sociodemographic Variables.
N=100

Sociodemographic variables	n	Mean±SD	F/t df p
Age(in years)*			
45-50	27	21.74±6.09	F =0.1
51-55	45	21.97±4.84	df=97
56-60	28	22.00±5.72	p=.98 ^{NS}
Educational status			
Illiterate	2	18.50±4.94	F =.36
Elementary	52	22.17±6.15	df= 96
Secondary	28	22.14±6.37	p=.77 ^{NS}
Graduate and above	18	21.92±2.96	
Occupational status			
Working	23	20.52±3.95	t=1.34
Non- working/ home maker	77	22.92±6.10	df= 98
			p=.319 ^{NS}
Dietary habits			
Vegetarian	57	21.47±5.31	F=1.91
Non-vegetarian	35	23.22±6.65	df=97
Lacto ova vegetarian	8	19.37±1.99	p=.153 ^{NS}
Socio-economic Status (According to Kuppuswamy socioeconomic scale 2024)			
Upper			
Upper middle	2	21.50±9.19	F=1.91
Upper lower	28	21.60±7.11	df=96
Lower middle	25	21.80±5.18	p=.976 ^{NS}
	45	22.20±5.07	

***Mean age (in years) =53.57± 3.70**

Maximum score: 44

NS (non-significant) p>0.05

Minimum score: 00

Table 7: depicts the association between severity of menopausal symptoms with their sociodemographic profile which showed that according to age the higher mean score of severity of menopausal symptoms (22.00 ± 5.72) was found in the age group of 56–60 years. As per educational status, higher mean score of severity of menopausal symptoms (22.17± 6.15) was found among postmenopausal women with elementary level. In relation to occupational status, maximum mean score of severity of menopausal symptoms (22.92±6.10) was found in non-working/home maker. As per dietary habits, higher mean score of severity of menopausal symptoms (23.22±6.65) was found in non- vegetarian. As per socioeconomic

status, maximum mean score of severity of menopausal symptoms (22.20 ± 5.07) was found in lower middle class

Therefore, inference can be drawn that severity of menopausal symptoms was not found to be associated significantly with any of the sociodemographic variables.

DISCUSSION

Discussion: It was conducted according to objectives of the study. The findings of the study supported

The findings of the following studies support the major findings of the present study.

The findings of the study supported by **Ramyashree S, Veigas J, Kanagal D (2024)** results showed that 44% postmenopausal women in age group 51-55 year, with mean age 49.8 ± 8.6 , Majority (85%) were married, more than half (77%) belong to nuclear family, less than half (47.9%) were graduates⁷.

Nazarpour S, Simbar M, Majd H, Torkamani Z J, Andarvar K D, Rahnemaie F (2021) study shown that maximum women in the age group of 45-65 with mean age of 55.11 ± 3.99 . Majority (95%) women were married, maximum (80%) were housewife, and only (16%) were illiterate, more than half (52%) were working⁸.

Objectives 1: To assess the perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.

The findings of the following studies are congruent to the findings of the present study. **Shelbi R, Nasami S, Samina S T, Savit K (2024)** reported that the mean score of menopausal symptoms was 37.38 ± 19.04 (35%) of the participants had moderate symptoms, while 26.6% have severe symptoms, 25% have mild symptoms and 13.33% have no or little symptoms. Study revealed that majority of women experienced hot flushes (80%), followed by physical and mental exhaustion (70%)¹.

Essa R. M, Mahmoud N. M (2018) depicted the (40.4% & 42.5%) of the participant are suffered from the mild & moderate menopausal symptoms, respectively. While less than one fifth (17.1%) of them experienced severe menopausal symptoms⁹.

Objective 2: To find out the relationship between perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women.

On the contrary part **Nazarpour S, Simbar M, Majd H, Torkamani Z J, Andarvar K D, Rahnemaie F (2021)** revealed that the mean score of the body image was (163.07 ± 21.17) and the mean score of the severity of menopausal symptoms was (16.45 ± 8.38) and there was a strong negative correlation between the total score of all dimensions of body image with the total score of menopausal symptoms ($-0.45, p < 0.001$) between body image score and menopausal symptoms severity⁸.

On the other hand, results of the study by **Nazarpour S, Simbar M, Majd H, Torkamani Z J, Andarvar K D, Rahnemaie F (2021)** demonstrated the positive significant correlations between total score and scores for all domains of sexual function, with the total score of all dimensions of body image ($p < 0.001$)⁸.

Another study by Erbil Nulufer (2018) revealed significant positive correlation between Attitudes towards menopause and body image scores of women in menopause ($r = 0.386, p = 0.000$)²¹.

Objective 3: To determine the association of perceived body image and severity of menopausal symptoms among postmenopausal women with selected sociodemographic variables.

Study conducted by **Jalal M S (2024)** findings of the study revealed that association of menopausal symptoms with occupation and marital status was found to be non-significant as ($p > 0.05$) but the association of age, education and religion was found statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$)¹⁰.

CONCLUSION

In this study, most postmenopausal women (55%) reported altered Perceived body image, while 45% had a normal one. A majority (67%) experienced moderate menopausal symptom severity, with physical symptoms being moderate in 49% and psychological symptoms severe in 54%. Urogenital symptoms were moderate in 46%. There was a weak positive correlation between perceived body image and menopausal symptom severity, and body image was only significantly associated with dietary habits among the sociodemographic variables. Conversely, menopausal symptom severity was not significantly associated with any of the sociodemographic factors examined.

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