

HOW MENOPAUSE AFFECTS WOMEN'S SEXUAL FUNCTION? A REVIEW.

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ABSTRACT

Menopause is the cessation of menstruation due to the lack of activity of the ovarian follicles. It is a highly variable experience between women, however, it negatively affects female sexual function. The objective of this study is to review the evidence available in the last 7 years on how menopause affects sexual satisfaction, sexual function and frequency. This work was carried out following the guidelines of the PRISMA guide. The search for articles was done during April 2023 in the PUBMED and PsycArticles databases. The inclusion criteria were: scientific articles, studies published after August 2017, population made up of women with menopause, and articles that met the study objective. Some exclusion criteria were: Systematic review's publications, books, case studies, doctoral theses, older women with menopause whose sexual function may be altered by the presence of some type of disease. Of 348 articles, 6 were those that met the criteria for the objective of the study. The results show a negative relationship between menopause and sexual function. Those women who have or have had the menopause, present decreased sexual desire and sexual arousal, vaginal dryness, and a worse quality of sexual life. These negative effects are aggravated in Iranian women, due to the ideology that this culture presents. Many of these symptoms are on account of the lack of information and tools to deal with this stage of physical and psychological changes, so it would be convenient to take this into account for future research.

Key words: menopause, postmenopause, sexuality, sexual function.

CÓMO AFECTA LA MENOPAUSIA EN LA FUNCIÓN SEXUAL DE LAS MUJERES. UNA REVISIÓN.

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RESUMEN

La menopausia consiste en el cese de las menstruaciones debido a la falta de actividad de los folículos del ovario. Es una experiencia sumamente variable entre mujeres, sin embargo, esta afecta de manera negativa a la función sexual femenina. El objetivo de este estudio es revisar la evidencia disponible en los últimos 7 años sobre cómo afecta la menopausia en la satisfacción sexual, la disfunción sexual y en la frecuencia. Este trabajo se realizó siguiendo las directrices de la guía PRISMA. La búsqueda de artículos se hizo durante Abril de 2023 en las bases de datos PUBMED y PsycArticles. Los criterios de inclusión eran: Artículos científicos, estudios publicados posteriormente en Agosto de 2017, población compuesta por mujeres con menopausia, y artículos que cumplieran con el objetivo de estudio. Algunos criterios de exclusión fueron: Publicaciones de revisión sistemática, libros, estudios de caso, tesis doctorales, mujeres mayores con menopausia que su función sexual pueda verse alterada por la presencia de algún tipo de enfermedad. De 348 artículos, 6 fueron los que cumplieron los criterios para el objetivo del estudio. Los resultados arrojan una relación negativa entre la menopausia y la función sexual. Aquellas mujeres que tienen o han tenido la menopausia presentan una disminución del deseo sexual y la excitación sexual, la sequedad vaginal, y una peor calidad de vida sexual. Estos efectos negativos se ven agravados en mujeres iraníes, debido a la ideología que esta cultura presenta. Muchos de estos síntomas vienen dados por la falta de información y herramientas para afrontar esta etapa de cambios físicos y psicológicos, por lo que sería conveniente tenerlo en cuenta para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras clave: menopausia, postmenopausia, sexualidad, función sexual.

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INTRODUCTION

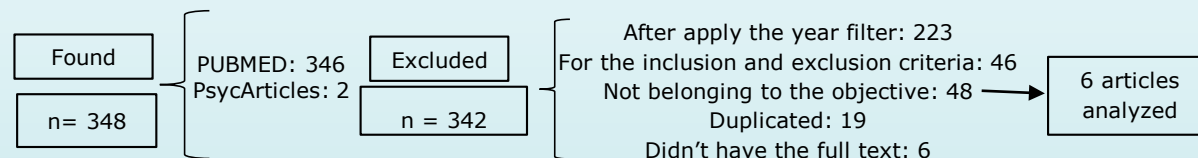
Menopause is the definitive cessation of menstruation due to the lack of activity of the ovarian follicles. It consists of several stages: premenopause, perimenopause and postmenopause. The symptoms that this entails are: the increased risk of cardiovascular disease, urogenital atrophy, alteration of the sleep-wake cycle and decreased libido. To treat this symptomatology we have different treatments: hormonal pharmacological, non-hormonal pharmacological and non-pharmacological. Sexuality is an integral part of the personality of every human being, and this presents a series of changes during menopause.

OBJECTIVE

Analyze the evidence from August 2017 to March 2023, on sexual function in menopausal women.

METHODS

A review of the literature was carried out following the guidelines of the PRISMA guide. The search was carried out during the month of April 2023 in the PUBMED and PsyArticles databases. The terms that were used to the search were: menopause, sexual, sexuality, sexual dysfunction, sexual activity, sexual behaviour, adult female, mature age, sexual desire, and sexual satisfaction. Three tables were created in order to put the characteristics and variables of the studies.



Authors	Objective	Time and year of study	Country and sample number	Sexual orientation and marital status	Age range and media	Measurement tools	Results
Kong, F., Wang, J., Zhang, C., Feng, X., Zhang, L., and Zang, H.	Assess sexual activity and menopausal and correlate this with their VMS.	Cross sectional 2019.	China n= 120.	Heterosexual and married.	46-60 53,1	Menopause Rating Scale (MRS). Vaginal Maturation Index and Ph value.	Less sexual activity. More sexual problems. More vaginal dryness. More sexual distress.
Pérez-Herrezuelo, I., Aibar-Almazán, A., Martínez-Amat, A., Fábrega-Cuadros, R., Díaz-Mohedo, E., Wangenstein, R., and Hita-Contreras, F.	To analyze female sexual function and its association with the menopause symptoms.	Cross sectional 2020.	Spain n= 182.	-	57-73 65,59	Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI). Menopause Rating Scale (MRS). The Hospital anxiety and depression scale (HADS).	Poor sexual functioning.
Javadivala, Z., Merghati-Khoei, E., Underwood, C., Mirghafourvand, M., and Allahverdipour, H.	To explore how women assign meaning and process sexual motivation during the menopause.	Qualitative 2018.	Iran n= 22.	Heterosexual and married.	44-59 52,81	Interviews.	Deficient sexual function.
Riazi, H., Madankan, F., Azin, S. A., Nasiri, M., and Montazeri, A.	Compare quality of sexual life and sexual self-efficacy.	Cross sectional 2021.	Iran n= 340.	Heterosexual and married.	30-60 43,59	Sexual quality of life- female (SQOL-F). Sexual self-efficacy questionnaire (SSEQ).	Less sexual activity. Low sexual function. Less sexual satisfaction.
Jalali, T., Bostani Khalesi, Z., y Jafarzadeh-Kenarsari, F.	To determine the association between sexual self-efficacy and quality of life.	Cross sectional 2021.	Iran n= 558.	Heterosexual and married.	40-60 54,01	Menopausal-Specific Quality of Life Questionnaire (MENQOL). Standard SSE questionnaire .	Low orgasm scores. Poor sexual functioning. Low frequency scores.
Khalesi, Z. B., Jafarzadeh-Kenarsari, F., Mobarrez, Y. D., and Abedinzade, M.	To assess the impact of menopause on the sexual function of women and their spouses.	Cross sectional 2020.	Iran n= 215.	Heterosexual and married.	51-66 56,75	Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI).	Deficient sexual function. Less sexual activity. Decreased orgasm.

DISCUSSION

Most of the studies were conducted in Iran, so the results may be biased by the type of culture and the attitudes they present towards sexuality. All the publications that were selected for the study show similar results. Sexual function is an important part of women's lives, and low sexual function has a severe impact on physical and psychological health. The severity of urogenital symptoms of menopause is associated with a decrease in female sexual function. Lubrication problems are associated with reduced motivation, desire and sexual arousal. Therefore, there is a decrease in the frequency of sexual relations and a worse quality of sexual life.

CONCLUSIONS

During this review, it has been possible to observe the variety of negative effects that menopause has on female sexual function. This study can be of great help since it discloses all aspects of female sexual function that decline with age and menopause, thus indicating the urgency of establishing action measures to address this stage in a more optimal.

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