

Association between Physical Activity and Menopausal Symptoms among Midlife Women: A Cross-sectional Study in Rural Nagercoil and Kanyakumari Districts, Tamil Nadu, India

S. Mathavi¹, Aruna Subramaniam², Lisy Joseph³, R. Poongodi⁴

¹Tutor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecological Nursing, SRM Trichy College of Nursing, Tiruchirappalli, ²HOD, Department of Community Health Nursing, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (Deemed University), ⁴Associate Professor, Department of Community Health Nursing, Sri Ramachandra Faculty of Nursing, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (DU), Chennai, Tamil Nadu, ³Professor and HOD, Department of Community Health Nursing, Narayan Nursing College, Gopal Narayan Singh University, Rohtas, Bihar, India

Abstract

Background: Majority of midlife women experience menopausal symptoms through the period of menopausal transition. Variation in the severity of these symptoms experienced by them also restriction on physical activity (PA) due to menopause in women. **Objectives:** Association between the severity of menopausal symptoms and PA according to menopause status among midlife rural women. **Materials and Methods:** An analytical cross-sectional study was done on 300 midlife rural women (aged 35–60 years), selected through purposive sampling from nine villages under Agastheeswaram Primary Health Center, Nagercoil, Kanyakumari, India. A sub-sample (25%) was selected for assessment of PA during four menopausal stages using a structured interview schedule with a background variable questionnaire, Green Climacteric Scale, and long form of “International PA Questionnaire.” **Results:** Mean age was 45.54 ± 6.34 years. Majority of women experienced severe psychological symptoms (89.7%) and severe physical symptoms (86.0%), while 89.0% reported moderate vasomotor symptoms. Overall, 89.4% of participants were severely affected by menopause-related symptoms. Regarding PA levels, 36.4% of women in early menopausal transition and 26.7% late menopausal transition met World Health Organization exercise guidelines. Among postmenopausal women, 42.1% early postmenopause and 37.5% late postmenopause. Statistical analysis revealed significant associations between PA and symptom sub-scores ($P = 0.037$) and psychological symptom sub-scores ($P = 0.047$). A weak but statistically significant negative correlation was observed between total activity scores and both physical symptoms and vasomotor symptoms ($P < 0.001$). **Conclusions:** The quality of life in women during their mid-life can be improved by PA. It can also play a protective role in lessening climacteric symptoms.

Key words: Menopause, physical activity, symptoms, women