

Canonical Correlation Analysis of The Determinants of Menopausal Symptoms

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Abstract: Objectives: To describe the intensity and determinants of symptoms commonly attributed to the menopause among a random sample of women aged 50 to 59 years, selected from the total population of a geographically defined area. Design: Data were collected based on a cross-sectional design using structured questionnaire and face-to-face interview survey. Setting: Households. Participants: Four hundred and fifty women, aged 50 to 59 years, randomly selected from Alexandria residents by the method of cluster sampling. Main outcome measures: Self-reported symptoms, factor scores for menopausal symptoms extracted by factor analysis, and an index for the number of experienced symptoms. Results: 77.5% of currently married women and 80.3% of unmarried women reported moderate-to-severe symptoms with significant differences between the two groups in intensity of vasomotor [more intense among married], psychological, and miscellaneous [more intense among unmarried]. Canonical correlation revealed seven significant roots among married women explaining 82.2% of variance in menopausal symptoms and four among the unmarried explaining 57.5% of variance. Among married women, the prominent factors in relation to menopausal symptoms are duration of hormone use, obesity, knowledge and attitude concerning menopause, pattern of menopause, and physical activity. Among the unmarried, there were also correlations of menopausal symptoms with same factors in addition to work, education, and time since last menses. Conclusion: Though menopause is a natural biological process, it has been shaped by social, economic, medical, and reproductive factors. Putting these factors in mind of health care workers can help women to go through this passage of life with no or minimal discomfort.

INTRODUCTION

The menopause has been described as a deficiency disease associated with a wide variety of physical and psychological symptoms including hot flushes, night sweats, dyspareunia, urinary frequency, sleep disturbance, tiredness, depression, anxiety, concentration difficulties, and inability to cope.¹ Although all women will at some point experience the menopause, the type of effect it will have on their life will be dictated by many personal factors. These include exercise, diet, medical history, and

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