The aims of this survey were to investigate the impact of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms upon women in the workplace. \(^1\)

Roughly 80% of women experience symptoms related to menopause, with 25% having severe symptoms that detrimentally affect their family, home and work life.\(^2,5\) These include impaired concentration, tiredness, poor memory, depression, feeling down, lowered confidence, sleepiness and hot flushes.\(^2\)

Around 5% of women will find it very difficult to cope with work during their menopausal transition,\(^2\) and around 10% of women who experience severe menopausal symptoms actually leave employment.\(^3\)

Evidence on the impact of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms on women in the workplace is scarce.\(^4\)

The questionnaire was completed by 1132 women. Almost three quarters of respondents stated that colleagues had noted a deterioration in their work performance (Figure 2). As a result of poor performance at work, 9% of respondents reported having time off work due to menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms (Figure 3).

Impact of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms on absenteeism

Around half of respondents reported having time off work due to menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms (Figure 3), with 19% being absent for >8 weeks (Figure 4).

In total, 37% of women had been provided with a sickness certificate from their doctor; of these, 52% listed anxiety/stress as the cause, with only 7% stating menopause as a reason for sickness leave (Figure 5).

Impact of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms on hours worked

As a result of their menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms, 31% of women had thought about reducing their working hours and 32% had thought about leaving their job (Figure 6).

Just over half of women had chosen to reduce their hours at work (Figure 6). Management of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms

Almost three-quarters of respondents had received some sort of treatment from a doctor or other healthcare professional for their menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms (Figure 7).

Information and advice about the menopause

Only 14.5% of women had received any advice or support from their workplace about their menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms.

In total, 9% of respondents stated that their workplaces offered menopause awareness sessions, 10% offered menopause discussion groups, and 4% offered training for staff about the menopause (Figure 8).

Just over three-quarters of women reported that their workplaces offered no information or support regarding the menopause (Figure 8).

Results

Respondents
- The questionnaire was completed by 1132 women.
- Over 90% of respondents felt that their menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms were having a negative impact on their work (Figure 1), with over half of respondents stating that colleagues had noted a deterioration in their work performance (Figure 2).
- As a result of poor performance at work, 9% of women had to undergo a disciplinary procedure.

Impact of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms on work performance
- Around half of respondents reported having time off work due to menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms (Figure 3), with 19% being absent for >8 weeks (Figure 4).
- In total, 37% of women had been provided with a sickness certificate from their doctor; of these, 52% listed anxiety/stress as the cause, with only 7% stating menopause as a reason for sickness leave (Figure 5).

Management of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms
- Almost three-quarters of respondents had received some sort of treatment from a doctor or other healthcare professional for their menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms (Figure 7).

Information and advice about the menopause
- Only 14.5% of women had received any advice or support from their workplace about their menopausal or perimenopausal symptoms.
- In total, 9% of respondents stated that their workplaces offered menopause awareness sessions, 10% offered menopause discussion groups, and 4% offered training for staff about the menopause (Figure 8).
- Just over three-quarters of women reported that their workplaces offered no information or support regarding the menopause (Figure 8).

Conclusions

- Results from this survey highlight the substantial impact of menopausal and perimenopausal symptoms on women in the workplace in terms of their work performance, sickness rate, and ability to cope with their job.
- The reasons for sickness are usually incorrectly classified as being related to anxiety or stress.
- There is a general lack of support for menopausal and perimenopausal women in the workplace.

References

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