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A Thematic Analysis of how the experience of menopause effects women's wellbeing



# Background

Previous research within the field of women’s health, regarding menopause, has a deficit in formal literature that addresses the effect menopause has on women’s well-being.

This qualitative research project aims to investigate women’s experiences of menopause and how the transitional period effects their well-being. The hormone changes of menopause can impact mental and physical health for example, it has been reported that women experience increased feelings of anxiety, stress, and depression during the transition (NHS Inform Scot, 2022).

This transitional period influences personal, social, and biological aspects of women’s lives, encompassing general well-being. The impact that menopause has on all women’s lives at different periods, as well as these effects and possible treatments, warrants further study.

Therefore, the aim of this project is to reduce the gap in knowledge and to be able to provide practical implications for women who experience emotional and physical disturbances within the menopausal period to improve their reported state of well-being.

# Methods

This study is of qualitative design and employs semi-structured interviews, to explore women’s experiences of menopause and its effect on their well-being.

Following ethical approval, eight women were included in this study, online interviews occurred over teams.

I used the six-stage approach and explored at mainly a semantic level. I began by immersing myself in the data to become familiar with the content of the 8 transcripts (Stage One) and I noted information that was relevant to my topic. I then generated the initial code (Stage two) which an example of can be found in the appendix (Appendix B) and then searched for any emerging themes and patterns (Stage Three). Once I established some themes, I reviewed them to ensure they were relevant to my topic and had enough supporting data from the transcripts (Stage Four). Following this, I defined the final three themes that directly addressed my research topic (Stage Five) and then I finally analyzed the themes and wrote up the results of my report (Stage Six).

# Results

The data produced emphasised that menopause has various effects on women’s well-being. The three main themes generated from the data include ‘emotional effects of menopause on daily life’, this included family relations, productivity in the workplace and general decrease in mental health on usual activities.

The theme of ‘coping mechanisms’, included the use of hormone replacement therapy, exercise and diet changes, social support, breathing techniques and ice water immersion.

The final theme ‘requirement of more information and communication’ included the notion that if more information was available and communicated to women prior to beginning the transition it would be much more manageable.

# Conclusions and Future Research

To conclude the contribution towards menopause research is very important, in addition to the increased understanding of women’s experiences of menopause and how it affects their well-being. This includes social relations, physical and mental health as well as treatment within the workplace.

The increase in knowledge regarding the experience of menopause promotes the development of strategies that aid women’s abilities to cope with the menopausal transition whilst maximizing all women’s well-being during this period.

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