

Unveiling Menopausal Narratives Among Asian Women in the UK – A Qualitative Study

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Background

Menopause, a universal transition, is often masked in cultural silence amongst Asian women in the UK [1]. Currently, there is a disparity in menopause experiences and access to support among ethnic minority women [2-3]. This study delves into their concealed experiences, aiming to illustrate the socio-cultural intricacies influencing their menopausal journey and strategies to optimise this.

Objectives

To explore the perceptions, challenges, and coping mechanisms of Asian women in the UK during menopause, and to identify culturally sensitive methods to enhance their well-being.

Study Design

A qualitative study employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

Asian women who self-reported to be peri- or post-menopausal residing in the UK were interviewed. Interviews were transcribed and data was analysed thematically, following Braun and Clarke's framework [4], to extract nuanced insights into their menopausal experiences.

Results

17 participants partook in the study. The participants in this qualitative study were either perimenopausal, menopausal or post-menopausal, with a mean age of 51. The data analysis revealed 7 overarching themes, 28 subcategories and 213 primary codes.

Perceptions of Menopause	Awareness Levels	Personal Experiences	Management Approaches	Barriers to seeking support	Facilitators to seeking support	Suggested Strategies
- Cultural Influences - External Influences - Taboo - Normal Process - Period of Change - Ageing - Resilient Attitude	- Existing Understanding - Sources of information	- Mental Health - Positive Changes - Sex Life - Symptoms - Work	- Alternative Treatment - Medical Management - No Management - Self Management - Sources of Support	- Treatment challenges - healthcare professionals - Individual Barriers	- Health Care Professionals - Individual Factors - Curiosity Around Menopause - Organisational	- Community Based Interventions - Healthcare Practice - Individual Factors
"It's kind of a cultural thing. Because the entire reproduction related topic we try to avert be it safe sex, or menopause, or anything, any topic related to reproduction. We try to avoid it. That's the thing we feel very awkward to discuss it." (Participant 11) "A woman goes through that phase of life and then you just get on with it." (Participant 6)	"they don't even realise they're under menopausal stage. They just get on with their lives. And then when they resort to moods, big fights, they think that it's because there's a problem in the family without even thinking that actually, you are in a process in your body is changing. And no one understand that, because they're not focused on that." (Participant 9) "it's very time consuming because online is like information overload. So it's very difficult to find out which is genuine information, which is suitable for me because one size doesn't fit all." (Participant 11)	"Mentally, very low, most of the time, I don't feel energy. Sometimes I don't put energy to get up in the morning. Somehow I drag myself into bed and I do my daily routine." (Participant 11)	"For me, I really embrace my age. And I think my prayer and faith helped and my culture helped a lot to embrace that." (Participant 1) "so first they tried with hormone replacement pads, which wasn't very useful in my case. So I had to go back to the GP and then they gave me antidepressants." - (Participant 4)	"And the last thing they [women from ethnic minorities] think about is themselves. And this is something very insignificant I feel for them...because they keep their health below everything, towards the end of a priority list." (Participant 17)	"It's becoming now openly discuss, which really help women that these conditions are actually okay to say and actually it's okay to have those symptoms, that you're not just acting or you're just not feeling you know, that you are faking your symptoms...Information and social media and friends, you know, as it's more openly discussed, it's becoming more easier to talk about it." (Participant 1)	"I think information and for the family members too on how to support women. So because there is this general sentiment and perception of women should just deal with it. But it's not like that the entire household... especially the men of the household. Information for them on how to support a woman who is going through menopause. I think especially for ethnic minorities this is very, very essential." (Participant 14)

Conclusion

The menopausal experiences of Asian women in the UK are deeply embedded in cultural contexts, leading to unique challenges. This study sheds light on the menopausal experiences of Asian women in the UK, highlighting prevalent stigma around the topic, specific knowledge gaps and a strong desire for targeted initiatives. The identified facilitators and barriers provide a foundation for developing culturally sensitive, inclusive, and effective resources to enhance the menopause experience for these women.

References

