

Factors Influencing Treatment Decisions Among Menopausal Women in 5 European Countries

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Introduction

- Menopausal symptoms are common and bothersome to many women, yet are often untreated
- Surveys of menopausal symptoms conducted in the US and Europe found that:
 - Hot flashes, sleep disturbances, and night sweats were the most commonly reported by women¹⁻³
 - Incidence, depending on the symptom, ranged from 27% to 90%^{4,5}
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has demonstrated efficacy for treating many menopausal symptoms, but use of HRT significantly dropped following reports of previously unidentified risks with oral HRT: the Women's Health Initiative in 2002 and the Million Women Study in 2003^{6,7}
 - Menopause-related consultations with general practitioners (GPs) fell from 18% to 10% between 1996 and 2005⁸
 - More than 60% of women in 2012 managed their menopausal symptoms without their healthcare professionals (HCPs), often through social support and advice from friends, family and the internet⁸

Objective

To assess symptoms associated with menopause and women's behaviors towards seeking treatment in 5 European countries

Methods

- A July 2014 market research survey (AX's Consulting) assessed menopausal symptoms and treatment in a nationally represented population of 2610 women in 5 major European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom)
- An Internet survey, consisting of a screening section (8 questions) and a main survey (15 questions), was given to postmenopausal women. The sample completing the full survey was equally stratified by the age groups of 45-54 yrs, 55-64 yrs, and ≥65 yrs.

Results

- A total of 3890 postmenopausal women were screened for the survey, 2610 of these women had symptoms related to menopause, and 1401 postmenopausal women completed the full survey, answering all questions regarding treatment (Table 1)

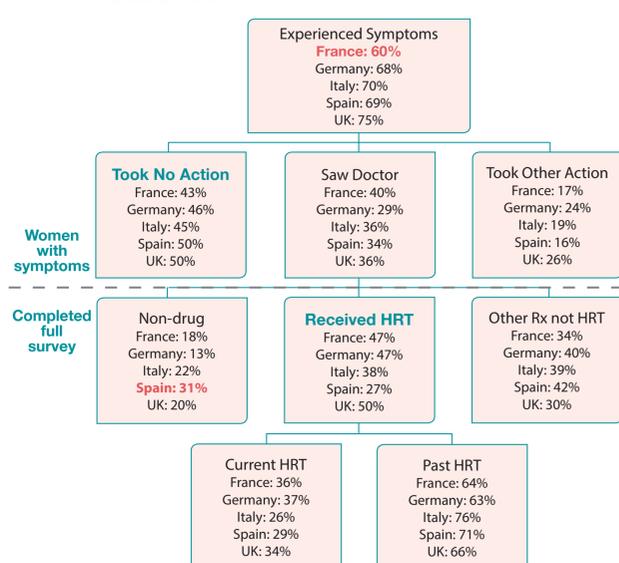
Table 1. Disposition of survey respondents

	France	Germany	Italy	Spain	UK
Total menopausal population screened (n=3890)	1213	1119	547	452	559
Menopausal women with symptoms related to menopause (n=2610)	727	765	383	314	421
Women completing full survey* (n=1401)	413	411	210	157	210

*Equally stratified by age group: 45-54; 55-64; 65+

- ~70% of respondents across 4 of the countries currently have or have had menopausal symptoms; this incidence in France was lower (60%; Figure 1)
- Majority of women found their symptoms bothersome, regardless of age
- 50%-62% of women took action for treating their menopausal symptoms (Figure 1)
- Of those who visited a physician, approximately 80% received either over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription treatment (Germany, France, UK and Italy; 69% in Spain; Figure 1)

Figure 1. Menopausal symptom prevalence and treatment outcomes



- Roughly 85% of women experienced hot flashes, commonly along with night sweats, at some point during menopause (Figure 2)
- Symptoms tended to decrease with age, except for vaginal dryness (Figure 3A-C)

Figure 2. Menopausal symptom prevalence for all symptoms reported

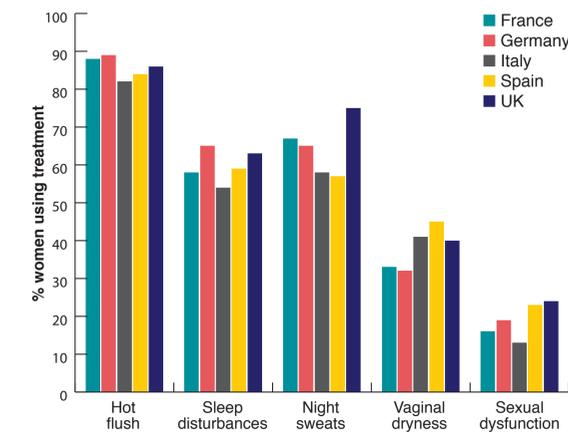
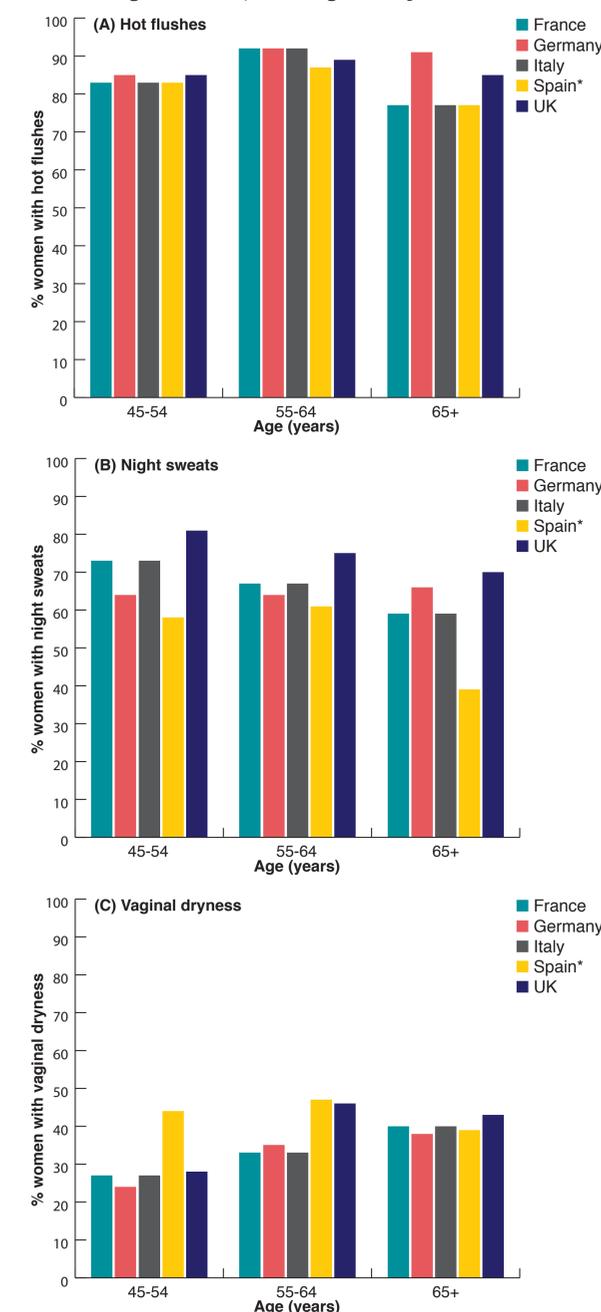


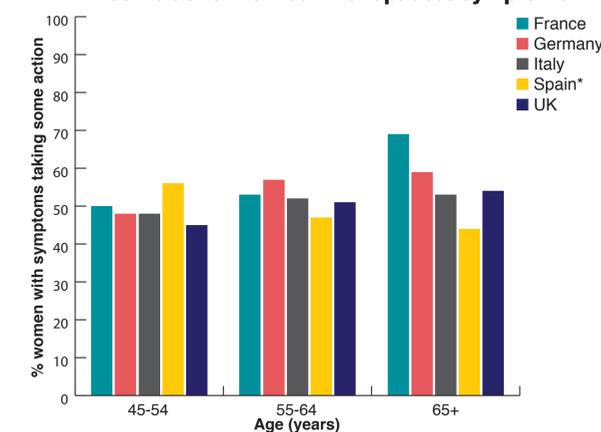
Figure 3. Symptom prevalence by age for hot flashes, night sweats, and vaginal dryness



* >65 population underrepresented in Spain, making a comparison difficult with other countries.

- Individual women reported experiencing multiple types of menopausal symptoms, ranging in number from 3.5 (Italy) to 3.9 (UK). The decision to take action for symptom treatment (see a doctor, visit pharmacy, etc.) was influenced by the number of symptoms and symptom severity.
- Of postmenopausal women with symptoms, younger women (<55) took less action than older women

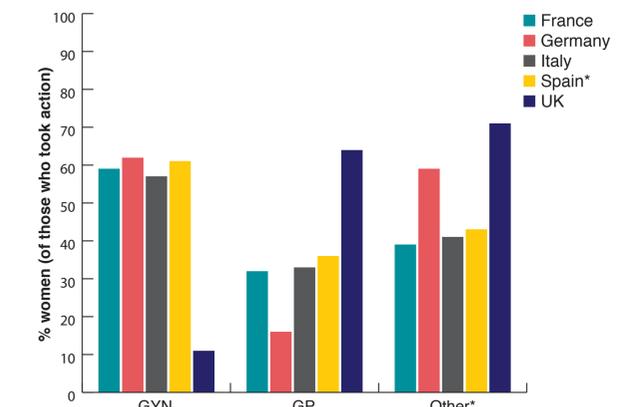
Figure 4. Differences in age groups for decision to take some action to treat menopausal symptoms



* >65 population underrepresented in Spain, making a comparison difficult with other countries.

- Of those women who decided to take action, approximately 75% consulted a physician, mainly a gynecologist (except in the UK where 66% saw a GP; Figure 5)
- The majority of women reported seeing their gynecologist at least every 2 years (in the UK, the GP fulfills this role)

Figure 5. Type of action taken to treat menopausal symptoms



GYN=consulted with a gynecologist, GP=consulted with a general practitioner. *Visited pharmacy, bought from store, visited aging center.

Limitations

- Although a national population was sought, the population of surveyed women may not be representative of the national population in each country
- The survey did not include questions regarding some demographics or behaviors that might have affected women's experience of menopausal symptoms
- Although the sample for each country was equally stratified by age group, the low response for Spanish women over 65 reporting symptoms reduced the percentage of women in that group, making comparisons across countries for that group difficult

Conclusions

- This survey of women in 5 European countries showed
 - While symptoms associated with menopause were common, only about 50% of women took action for treatment
 - Hot flashes were highly prevalent among women from all countries, while other symptoms were more variable among countries
 - Unlike hot flashes and night sweats, vaginal dryness tends to increase with age
 - The number and severity of symptoms along with age influenced their decision to take action
 - Of those who sought treatment most consulted with an HCP
 - For those who saw a physician, the majority received prescription treatment (both HRT and non-HRT)
- In summary, women of all menopausal age groups suffered from various symptoms, but many did not seek treatment. Those who sought treatment mostly consulted with a physician and subsequently received HRT or another prescription.

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Disclosures

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