More than 60% of women in 2012 managed their menopausal symptoms without their healthcare practitioners (HCPs), often through social support and advice from friends, family and the internet.

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 2610 of these women. The sample completing the full survey was equally stratified by the age groups of 45-54, 55-64 y, and ≥65 y.

Results

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

Table 1. Disposition of survey respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women who completed the main survey</th>
<th>Women who completed the full survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 flushes, sleep disturbances, and night sweats were the most commonly reported by women.
  - Incidence, depending on the symptom, ranged from 27% to 93%.
- 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 2002 and the Million Women Study in 2003.

- Menopause-related consultations with general practitioners (GPs) fell from 18% to 10% between 1996 and 2005.
- More than 60% of women in 2012 managed their menopausal symptoms without their healthcare practitioners (HCPs), often through social support and advice from friends, family and the internet.

Figure 2. Menopausal symptom prevalence for all symptoms reported

Of those who visited a physician, approximately 80% consulted a physician, mainly an obstetrician/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

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 flushes were highly prevalent among women from all countries, while other symptoms were more variable among countries.
  - Unlike hot flushes 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.

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.

References


Disclosures

TherapeuticsMD supported the survey and medical writing assistance provided by Jolene Mason, PhD (Precise Publications, LLC). S.G., B.B., and M.K. are employees of TherapeuticsMD. C.C. consults to pharmaceutical companies including but not limited to TherapeuticsMD.

Presented at the 10th European Congress on Menopause and Andropause, May 20 – 22, 2015, Madrid, Spain.