

# The Menopause Experience: A Quality Improvement Project

S. Munatsi, M. Pammi, S. Chadwick, D. Gamoudi, R Taylor

## Background

In 2016, 10,350 women living with HIV aged 45-56 attended HIV clinics in the UK. The BHIVA/BASHH/FSRH Guidelines for sexual and reproductive health (2017) state that all women between the ages 45-56 should have an annual menopausal review and be given information about the perimenopause/menopause along with information around the use of HRT.

## Aim

Approximately 13% (153/1200) of our HIV cohort are women aged between 45-56. Our aim was to review these women attending our services and assess if they have ever discussed menopause, have menopausal symptoms and whether they might benefit from a discussion about or initiating HRT.

## Methods

A comprehensive questionnaire looking at contraception, menopausal symptoms, comorbidities, medications and lifestyle risk factors was developed and information obtained.

Case note review was undertaken following completion of the questionnaire and information gathered around clinical review. FRAX and cardiovascular scores were calculated and their antiretroviral (ARV) regimen were reviewed.

## Results

- 31 women between age 45-56 completed the questionnaire. 90 % of these women were on HIV treatment and all had an undetectable viral load.
- 81% were Black African/Black Caribbean, 13 % White British and 6% Asian in Ethnicity. (Chart 1)
- None of them had a menopause review during their visit with a HIV physician but 39% had menopausal symptoms which would have been identified if questioned.
- 23 % had heard of HRT and only half of them had been given this information from a healthcare professional. Otherwise they had heard about it through word of mouth and no information had been given/sought about whether they would be eligible or it may help with their menopausal symptoms.
- 61% of the women questions were still having regular periods, with no symptoms of menopause, but given their age, are likely to reach menopause in the near future so would be worth discussing symptoms/signs in advance and as well as information around Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).
- Only 1 of the symptomatic women had discussed the menopause with their GP and started HRT which they found beneficial.

Chart 1

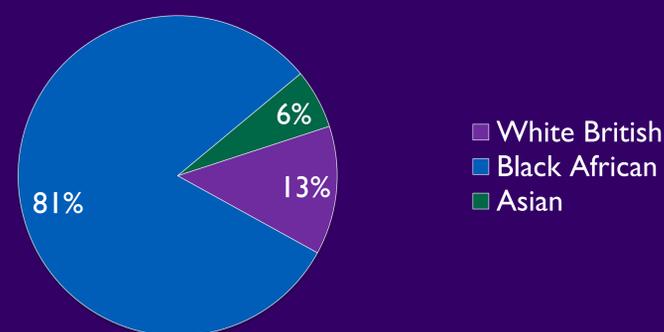
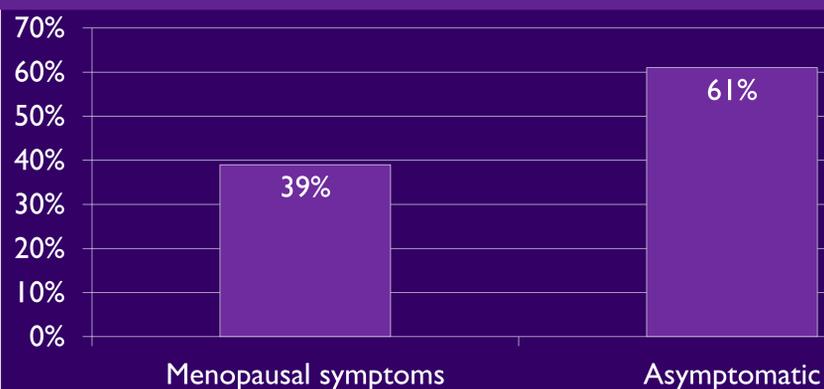


Chart 2



## Discussion

- Women with HIV are more likely to undergo premature menopause and hence it is very important to enquire about menopause at least once a year in their annual review. A comprehensive review to include their FRAX, cardiovascular risk scores, their current anti-retroviral regimen, pharmacological review to identify any drug-drug interactions in women of this age group is crucial to minimise any drug related side effects.
- Information on HRT should be made readily available for these women.
- Following review of our results, we believe that women living with HIV should have access to specialist menopause care

## Conclusion

This survey has highlighted that menopausal symptoms are extremely common in women of the specified age group. Based on our survey, we aim to improve 'menopausal awareness' by not only identifying the issues in our annual review but also providing information and guidance to deal with menopause.

## Acknowledgement

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## References

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