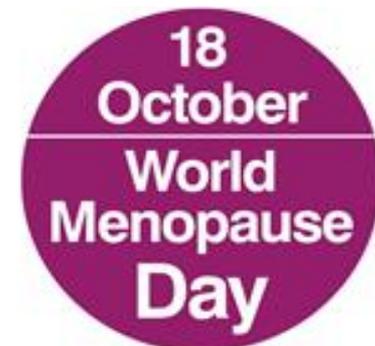


Menopause for thought: managing the change at work

World Menopause day 2021

IOSH Webinar 18 October 2021



What is The Menopause?

- Normal physiological transition in females
- Defined as end of female reproductive function^(1,2)
- Between ages of 44 & 55 yrs⁽³⁾ - average 51⁽⁴⁾
- *early onset menopause (1 in 100)* as Chemical-, pharmacological- or surgery induced menopause⁽⁴⁾
- Preceded by perimenopause or menopausal transition lasting 2 to 10 yrs⁽²⁾

Menopause symptoms and statistics^(1,2,4)



88% of woman
are
symptomatic⁽¹⁾

25% of women
will have severe
symptoms^(3,5)

Symptomatic women are 8 times
more likely to report issues with
low workability⁽⁶⁾

Most
commonly
reported
physical
symptoms⁽¹⁾

Hot flushes

Night sweats

Sleep disturbances

Joint pain

Osteoporosis

Cardiovascular disorders

Most
common
psychological
symptoms⁽¹⁾

Mood disorders

Depression

Difficulties concentrating

Memory lapses (forgetfulness)

Fatigue

Irritability and anxiety

Global relevance of menopause

- Globally ± 657 million women aged 45-59
- ± 50% work during menopausal transition ⁽⁴⁾
- Numbers will increase ⁽⁵⁾
- Cultural differences
- Many leave the workplace due to impact of maladapted workplaces

Current state of affairs

- Remains poorly recognised at work
- Taboo subject (5,6,7)
- Managers lack knowledge to address issues (3)
- Under researched in the workplace (2,7,8)
- OMP acknowledged insufficient knowledge of menopausal health in work context (6)

Impact on work^(3,11,12)

Impact quality and productivity

- Reduced ability to learn new tasks
- Difficulty paying attention to detail
- Poor memory 'brain fog'
- Increased absence and presenteeism
- 4 million lost workdays in UK (2018)
- 2030 productivity losses could exceed \$150 billion/yr

Womens experiences & work

- Negative perception of manager – labelled as weak, incompetent, unstable and depressed ⁽⁷⁾
- Lack of support in coping with symptoms ⁽⁸⁾
- Use annual leave/rest days to cope with symptoms
- Not confident to disclose status to managers ⁽⁹⁾
- Fear of stigmatization and discrimination
- Do not request accommodations
- Reduce working hrs or leave employment to cope

What organisations and OSH professionals can do (4,8,9)

- Support menopausal women
- Provide age and gender-specific Health Risk Assessment
- Implement adjustments to physical environment
- Address psychosocial issues
- Provide information and training
- Train key functions i.e. line managers
- Specific policies, procedures and programs
- Competent persons to conduct HRA
- Health promotion activities earlier in life cycle
- Financial support for resources to self-monitor symptoms e.g. blood pressure monitors

Conclusion

Women represent a talented and experienced cohort of the working population, and yet most workplaces are silent on their needs during the menopause with many managers lacking adequate knowledge to address work-related issues.

We need to create

menopause-friendly workplaces that achieve a much-needed level playing field for women at work allowing them to continue to achieve their full potential as members of the working community.

Resources

- **IOSH – Menopause and the workplace inquiry**
<https://iosh.com/my-iosh/consultation-listing/>
- **Inclusive and supportive workplaces needed to help menopausal women, says IOSH** <https://iosh.com/more/news-listing/inclusive-and-supportive-workplaces-needed-to-help-menopausal-women-says-iosh/>
- **NHS -** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>
- **SOM – Guidance on menopause and the workplace**
<https://www.som.org.uk/sites/som.org.uk/files/Guidance-on-menopause-and-the-workplace.pdf>
- **Menopause: The menopause is a workplace issue: guidance and model policy**
<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/10/25831.pdf>
- **ACAS Menopause at work -** <https://www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work/supporting-staff-through-the-menopause>

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Women's Health Strategy

Department of Health and Social Care – Call for evidence



Department of Health & Social Care - IOSH written submission to the Women's Health Strategy: Call for Evidence



Policy in a nutshell Consultation series



Department of Health & Social Care Women's Health Strategy: Call for Evidence

Rationale

This call for evidence will form the basis of a landmark government-led Women's Health Strategy, to improve the health and wellbeing of women across England. IOSH's response mainly focused on the core themes around 'Maximising women's health in the workplace' and 'Understanding and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on women's health'.

Our response

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying issues and problems in the occupational health and wellbeing of women remains a challenge that requires effective management and prioritisation through government, public policy efforts and within workplaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More occupational hazards are identified as disproportionately impacting women's work-related health, as more women enter the workforce, as the need for sustainable work increases, as retirement ages are raised, and the exacerbation of women's health issues impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the specific topic of women's health IOSH advocates for increasing the visibility of women's occupational health, work-related health and wellbeing including improvements in sex, gender differences and gender-based data associated to working conditions and health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forward-thinking practices from businesses need to cover the whole employability cycle of work (employment, re-employment and retention), including improved rehabilitation and back-to-work policies and interventions that support women's health in the workplace.

Key recommendations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To strengthen gender-sensitive policies, legislation and plans by increasing awareness of the burden associated with work-related health and wellbeing problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prioritise evidence-based policy recommendations and gear efforts towards improving the scientific evidence base on women's reproductive and gynaecological health and work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To better acknowledge the multiple exposures and combined risks for female-related jobs, for example multiple chemical exposures for cleaners or ergonomic exposures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace strategies need to be tailored to specifically address the work-related health needs of older female workers, young female workers, young mothers, vulnerable people and women from ethnic minorities.

How to get involved in future consultations

Explore IOSH's policy consultations microsite and read our past responses

<https://iosh.com/more/bur-influence/consultation-listings/>

Familiarise yourself with our policy positions

<https://iosh.com/more/bur-influence/our-policy-positions/>

This activity can be included in the CPD programme

<https://www.iosh.co.uk/itv/IOSH-ass/>

Menopause and the workplace



Inquiry: Menopause and the workplace IOSH response - Call for Evidence

WE'VE LAUNCHED AN INQUIRY

Menopause and the workplace

Contribute your views by 17th September

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE



Women and Equalities Committee

Policy in a nutshell Consultation series



Inquiry: Menopause and the workplace

Women and Equalities Committee – UK Parliament

Rationale

This inquiry examines the extent of discrimination faced by menopausal people in the workplace and investigates how Government policy and workplace practices can better support those experiencing menopause.

Our response

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our response helps building the policy and business case around the promotion of empathetic work cultures and menopause-friendly workplaces to achieve a much-needed level playing field for women at work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IOSH encourages approaching menopause in the workplace with a more holistic view that puts the spotlight on the recognition that this is a priority for women of working age.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IOSH recommends effective workplace policies and procedures, together with practical support to best support women, and those responsible for their health and safety at work, transitioning through menopause. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IOSH calls for the development of sound occupational safety and health and occupational health practices, policies, procedures and programs that are age- and gender-appropriate.

Key recommendations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how existing policies and procedures cater for the psychosocial needs of menopause-related issues e.g. sickness absence and medical appointments, flexible working hours, work patterns and hybrid models of working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider practices and environments within the workplace that may put the health and safety of menopausal women at risk that help perpetuating a gendered ageism culture in the workplace.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure risk assessment processes are in place that consider specific risks to menopausal women and identify reasonable adjustments for the individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To follow the advice from OSH professionals based on the outcomes of age-sensitive health risk assessments. These normally consider age-related characteristics of different age groups, including potential changes in functional capacities and health status.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing awareness, training and education strategies that raise understanding of the menopause, associated symptoms, impact on work, potential solutions and communication skills around having the conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing more inclusive and supportive workplace cultures and managerial styles that makes women feel comfortable disclosing symptoms or requesting adjustments if required.

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