Educated Working Women's Menopause Experience in an Islamic State

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Background:
Midlife women often experience some physiological changes. These are mainly related to the pre-, peri- and post-menopausal symptoms that have an impact on their physical and psychological well-being, as well as the general quality of life (Nisar & Sohoo, 2009). Midlife women from diverse cultures differ in behaviors, values, and beliefs related to their life experiences, and ways to manage menopausal symptoms. Besides various other factors, religion, culture, and social background have a significant influence on women's beliefs, understandings, behaviors, attitudes, and practices toward health and illness (Sluijs, Lombardo, Lesi, Bensoussan & Cardini, 2013; Yosef, 2008). Pakistani women tend to use a combination of modern medicine and self-care practices to promote health and prevent disease. There is limited research in the Pakistani context (Anwar, Green, Norris & Bukhari, 2015) of midlife women and their menopause symptoms and strategies used to manage menopause (Baig & Karim, 2006; Nisar & Sohoo, 2010).

Purpose:
The purpose of this study was to explore Pakistani, urban, Muslim midlife women's experiences of menopause and to acquire a deeper understanding of menopause and associated management strategies. Knowledge generated through this study will inform nurses and allied healthcare providers to better care and advocate for Pakistani Muslim women experiencing menopause.

Methods:
The focused ethnography research methodology was used. 20 Pakistani, Muslim midlife women were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling between December 2017 and March 2018. All participants were residents of urban Karachi. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted. Mandatory ethical considerations were followed in the study. The data were managed using Quirkos qualitative data management software. Thematic content analysis was conducted.

Results:
It is a common practice in Karachi, Pakistan that a man in the house is the head of the family, who is the primary bread earner; while the woman is expected to take care of the house and the family. In Pakistani culture, family ties are greatly valued. If a woman works outside of the home, she may or may not get any family support. Educated working women have high self-expectation as well as from the society. They have to control their emotions and keep calm and tolerant. Women expressed their frustration with the menopause symptoms that directly affected their personality and work. Women talked about the least support and societal biases during the transition phase of menopause.
Conclusion:
Each woman is unique and so are their experiences. Pakistani women's beliefs, perceptions, and actions were mainly driven by the robust socio-cultural, religious and familial ties that are strongly ingrained in the Pakistani setting. It was a huge challenge for midlife women to cope with the challenges that they naturally got with menopause and the challenges of gender discrimination and extraordinary expectations for women set by the society.

Title:
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Keywords:
experience, menopause and working women

Abstract Summary:
This qualitative study is a doctoral research project aimed at exploring Pakistani, urban, Muslim, midlife women’s experiences of menopause. A focused ethnography design was used for the purpose. The data were collected from Karachi, Pakistan.

References:


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