

How to deal menopause at the workplace?

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Introduction

Women are living longer lives, working longer hours, and retiring later than men. Women make up about 45 percent of the over 50-year-old workforce in practically all occupations, and all of them will experience menopause and accompanying symptoms, which may be mild to moderate in some women but severe and devastating in others. About half of these women will find it somewhat or somewhat difficult to cope with their jobs, while the other half will be unaffected and only 5% will be badly harmed. Poor focus, fatigue, memory loss, sadness, bad mood, low confidence, sleepiness, and especially hot flushes have all been identified as contributory factors. However, it is rarely told. Menopause, defined as a decline in reproductive hormones and the end of monthly bleeding, affects half of the world's population. Although the exact time varies by decade, the process normally begins between the ages of 45 and 55. With more women entering science fields, this transition is more likely to occur at important periods in their careers. However, most businesses do not view menopause - and the mental and physical changes that come with it - as a necessity. Many women are afraid to speak up for fear of being labelled as problematic [1,2].

Workplaces at universities are no exception. While employers have improved their awareness of and response to the demands of child-rearing, menopausal women's needs are frequently disregarded. Menopause strikes at a time when many women are taking on leadership roles in their teams or careers. Universities, on the other hand, disregard menopause at their risk. Failure to support personnel throughout this period of life puts institutions at risk of losing senior women's knowledge, and they may even face discrimination lawsuits.

Menopause and the workplace

Technically, menopause occurs 12 months after a person's final period. But the word is often used to refer to the before and after this occurrence, there were mental and bodily changes. Perimenopause occurs when the amount of oestrogen generated by the ovaries starts to decrease. Perimenopause can last several years and is characterised by irregular or heavier periods, hot flushes, and changes in cognition and mood [3]. Individual experiences differ significantly. Menopause is a natural period of life for women and men who have ovaries and uteruses, which includes some transgender men and non-binary people. It's also more prevalent than both pregnancy and parenting combined. Following ovaries removal surgery, some women experience sudden menopause. Some

medications, such as tamoxifen, which is used to treat breast cancer, can also cause menopause.

Support was desperately required

In most businesses around the world, there is little information regarding menopause experiences. However, little is known points to an underappreciated drain on productivity and mental health. According to a 2015 study published in *Menopause*, women experiencing hot flushes and nocturnal sweats miss up to 60% more workdays than their asymptomatic counterparts [4]. According to a survey published in 2021 by the Fawcett Society, a London-based gender equality advocacy group, more than half of women and transgender males undergoing menopause claimed their symptoms made them less likely to ask for a promotion.

A poll of menopausal women working in health care and universities in Australia, where women make up 57 percent of the higher-education workforce and 78 percent of the health and social-care sector, found that many felt terrible about their perceived underperformance. Many respondents also expressed a desire to reduce their working hours in order to enhance their health and work-life balance. In a 2019 UK poll of 1,400 women experiencing menopause symptoms, nearly two-thirds reported being unable to concentrate at work, more than half reported increased stress, and nearly one-third used sick leave due to symptoms [5].

Menopause symptoms are, in the end, just a stage of life that fades with age. For many women, the years following menopause are among the most productive and gratifying of their lives.

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