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AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF SELF-REPORTED MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS ON THE WORK ABILITY INDEX IN NURSES, MIDWIVES, HEALTHCARE ASSISTANTS AND NURSE ASSOCIATES IN A LARGE NHS TRUST IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

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Background

Menopause in the workplace is increasingly recognised as an important Occupational Health issue(1). There is limited evidence about the impact of menopausal symptoms in specific occupations, including among healthcare workers.

Aims

To investigate a possible association between self-reported severity of menopausal symptoms and work ability in NHS nurses, midwives, healthcare assistants and nurse associates.

Methods

A cross-sectional study of female nurses, midwives, nursing associates and healthcare assistants between the ages of 40 and 65, employed in an acute NHS hospital trust in the North of England between 07/06/2022 and 02/08/2022. The survey utilised an anonymous online questionnaire. Work ability was assessed using the Work Ability Index (WAI)(2) and severity of menopausal symptoms by the Menopause Rating Scale (MRS)(3). Demographic and occupational data were collected.

Results

Of 828 eligible staff, 322 responded (39%). The prevalence of poor/moderate WAI scores was 56.5% with a mean WAI of 35 (SD 6). The mean MRS was 20.18 (SD 7.66), corresponding with a clinical grading of “severe” menopausal symptoms.

Good/moderate WAI score was negatively associated with MRS score on univariate (Chi-squared score 72.94, OR 0.862, P value<0.001) and multivariate analysis (OR 0.51, R² 0.3, P value <0.001). BMI greater than 25 was also associated with WAI on multivariate analysis.

Conclusions:

This study demonstrated a statistically significant negative association between severity of menopausal symptoms and work ability in nurses, midwives, nursing associates and healthcare assistants. Occupational Health services are well placed to provide advice to mitigate the effects of these symptoms on work ability.

References:

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