Employee Perspectives and Challenges Concerning the Transition of Menopause (EMPACT Menopause) Study

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The menopause experience can be divided into three main phases, typically beginning in a woman’s 40s or 50s:

- **Perimenopause (or menopause transition):** The transitional time when the body experiences a natural decline in reproductive hormones, resulting in the end of a woman’s menstrual cycles.
- **Menopause:** The moment in life defined once 12 consecutive months have passed after the last menstrual cycle.
- **Postmenopause:** The life stage after menopause has completed.

Menopause is a universal life stage for women that has far-reaching economic, social, and health care implications during their working years. With over 75% of women participating in the labor workforce in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics) during their menopause transition years, it is critical to discuss women’s health and experiences in the context of workplace engagement.

The Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR) conducted a survey to better understand the workplace experiences of individuals who have entered or completed the menopause transition, as well as their coworkers and employers.

### EMPACT Menopause Study

**About the Respondents (N=955)**

- **Men:** 5%
- **Women:** 93%
- **Other*:** 2%

*Other includes transgender men and women, nonbinary or gender nonconforming individuals, and respondents who preferred not to state their gender identity.

**Age Distribution:**

- 12% 18-39 Years
- 71% 40-59 Years
- 16% 60+ Years

**Gender Identity:**

- Women 93%
- Men 5%
- Other* 2%
The following data highlights responses provided by women employees and supervisors in the United States.

Increasing the visibility of diverse experiences of women during and after the menopause transition can help to create equitable workplaces. While symptoms may include periods of hot flashes, brain fog, and changes in sexual function, other imprecise symptoms such as sleep and mood disturbances, weight gain, and joint pain can impact overall health, quality of life, and perspectives on work-life engagement.

**Most Bothersome Symptoms:**

- **79%** Sleep disturbances or insomnia
- **78%** Brain fog, difficulty with concentration, learning, and memory
- **68%** Weight gain or changes in body shape
- **66%** Fluctuations in mood or premenstrual syndrome (PMS), irritability, difficulty coping

**Race/Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to state</td>
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**Residence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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**Workplace Industry**

- Health Care & Research: 38%
- Professional: 22%
- Tech, Media & Education: 17%
- Physical & Service: 15%
- Other: 8%

**Menopause Stage**

- Pre-menopause or Unsure: 30%
- Peri-menopause: 28%
- Menopause: 42%

**Health Care & Research Industries** include health care and life and social sciences jobs.

**Professional Industries** include professional, administrative, government, and financial service jobs.

**Tech, Media, & Education Industries** include arts, media, engineering, computer, and education jobs.

**Physical & Service Industries** include retail, hospitality, transportation, utilities, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, and protective services jobs.
1 out of 6 supervisors indicated being uncomfortable setting up accommodations to address their employees’ menopause symptoms at work.

Enhancing workplace support and inclusivity offers mutual benefits for women and employers.

Availability of Menopause-specific Policies or Resources:

- 61% of Employees and 70% of Supervisors indicated no formal policies are in place
- 36% of Employees and 27% of Supervisors were unsure if resources are available

59% of women reported feeling uncomfortable asking for accommodations.

Respondents shared commentary about the “stigma attached [to menopause]” and the need for “normalization of the experience.”

Only 31% of women felt comfortable talking about their menopause symptoms or experiences at work.

While half of the supervisors reported having conversations with their employees about menopause, 14% indicated they had not, but would like to.

Menopause influences women in making career-related decisions.

1 in 4 women considered not pursuing or did not pursue a leadership opportunity

1 in 3 women considered reducing or reduced their workload

2 out of 5 women considered finding or found a new job

“As the oldest woman in a workplace of over ten women, [I] know what is in store for all of [my] colleagues...[and] hope to alleviate embarrassment and discomfort for them in the future.”

It is imperative that workplaces strategize to ensure the well-being and continued productivity of women throughout their career. Supporting women during midlife and the menopause transition is vital for retaining talent, fostering career growth, and boosting economic development.

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