

Impact of Reflexology on Menopause among Post menopausal Women

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ABSTRACT

Menopause is known as the termination of fertility in women due to aging and is a part of women normal developmental and biological process. The article discussed about Impact of Reflexology on Menopause among Post menopausal Women. Menopause develop hot flushes, insomnia and also causes anxiety. The study revealed that relaxation and diversion help reducing the effect of Menopause. The study showed that foot reflexology had a positive impact in reducing the menopausal symptoms.

Keywords: Menopause, hot flushes, anxiety, reflexology

1. INTRODUCTION

Menopause is known as the termination of fertility in women due to aging and is a part of women normal developmental and biological process. Menopause may occur in late 40 s or early 50 s. The average age for manifestation of menopause is 51 years.[1]. Often called the change of life, this stage signals the end of a woman's ability to have children. Many health care providers use the term menopause to refer to the period of time when a woman's hormone levels start to change. Menopause is said to be complete when menstrual periods have ceased for one continuous year[1]

Symptoms that may appear during menopause and continue through post menopause include: Painful intercourse, vaginal dryness, lack of energy, joint soreness, stiffness, back pain breast enlargement, breast pain, heart palpitations, headache, dizziness dry itchy skin, thinning tingling skin weight gain, urinary incontinence, urinary urgency interrupted sleeping patterns, heavy night sweats and hot flashes [2]. Psychological symptoms include anxiety, poor memory, inability to concentrate, depressive mood irritability, mood swings and less interest in sexual activity. According to literature, at least 60% of ladies suffer from mild symptoms and 20% suffer severe symptoms and 20% from no symptoms [3]

Reflexology is a reflex therapy method that has been applied in various cultures for thousands of years. It is defined as a treatment that is based on the stimulation of the nerves and blood circulation of the body, using the reflex points that correspond to all body parts, organs and systems. [4] Foot Reflexology is a type of massage that involves applying different amounts of pressure to the feet. It's based on a theory that these body parts are connected to certain organs and body systems [5]

Foot reflexology is commonly known as a holistic practice performed on the feet. The concept is based on the meridian points on the feet that correspond with various organs in the body.[6]

Menopause is a midlife stage which can be overcome. This phase of life is shrouded with lots of myths and taboos.[8] Menopause is an important physiological phenomenon in woman's lives. The average age of menopause is normally 50 years. The population of postmenopausal women is rising and by 2030, this population will reach one billion two hundred thousand with an annual increase of 47 million new cases per year.

With increasing life expectancy, women spend about one-third of their lives in the menopausal stage.[9] Many women are

interested in using complementary and alternative medicines for relief from their menopausal complications. The effect of menopause leads to anxiety, stress resulting in exaggeration of menopausal symptoms.

A study conducted in North India by Mahajan, *et al.*, [10] regarding health issues of menopausal women and found that the mean number of symptoms was found to be increasing in line with increase in age. Menopause, the gradual ending of a woman's reproductive life, is a natural process, however for many it can severely affect the quality of day to day life and activities.

Reflexology is a complementary therapy based on the theory that different points and areas on the feet correspond with different areas of the body. Reflexologists believe that massaging these points or areas will improve the health in your body.

A study done by Leila to see the effect of reflexology on sleep and fatigue among Postmenopausal women revealed that the application of reflexology enhanced the sleep quality and reduced the fatigue; thus concluding that reflexology could be used as a non pharmacological therapeutic option offered in nursing care.[11]

Studies have emphasized the need for assisting the per menopausal women to handle menopause effectively. The researchers had come across many women from the community who had menopause complaining regarding sleep disturbance, anxiety, irritability and mood swings.

Women had also shared stories regarding altered relationships because of menopause. The researcher through their own personal experiences at home and community felt the growing tensions experienced by the women during this transition. Studies on stress and relaxation have proved that massage is an effective relaxation therapy and enhances comfort. It was therefore felt necessary to study the impact of foot reflexology on anxiety and severity of menopause.

Statement: Problem

To study the impact of foot reflexology on menopause among Postmenopausal women in urban communities.

Objectives:

- To assess and compare the severity of menopause before and after reflexology in control and experimental groups.
- To assess the effect of reflexology on severity of menopause in an experimental group.
- To assess the opinion of reflexology in postmenopausal women in an experimental group.

Operational Definition:

- **Impact:** In this study; impact refers to:
 - The difference in the score of anxiety and severity of menopause and,
 - The opinion of menopausal women regarding reflexology.

Reflexology : In this study, reflexology refers to the foot massage that would be provided in the evening before bedtime for 15 minutes every day for 7 days

Steps of foot massage will be followed by the sequence and duration as mentioned below:

- Warm up twist (duration 3 minutes)
- Pressure points (duration 3 minutes)
- Achilles massage (duration 3 minutes)
- Top and side circles (duration 2 minutes)
- Finishing strokes (duration 4 minutes)

Menopausal Women: In this study, menopausal women refer to the women who have attained menopause for not more than 5 years.

Menopause: In this study, menopause refers to the assessment of severity of the symptoms that are manifested due to cessation of menses; which will be assessed by standardized menopausal rating scale. The symptoms will be scored by rating ranging from 0 to 4 (None, mild, moderate, severe and very severe)

Community: In this study, community refers to the urban area from Mumbai where the menopausal women are residing.

Assumption

Foot massage relieves muscle tension.

Self- reporting is a reliable means for data collection.

Delimitation:

Reflexology is provided once a day for 7 days.

The study is limited to menopausal women residing in selected community.

Effect of reflexology is only on symptoms of menopause.

Study is limited to women who can read and write

Research Approach: The study involved intervention and assessing its effect; the researchers felt it best to use **quantitative approach. Quasi Experimental two group per test post design was used.**

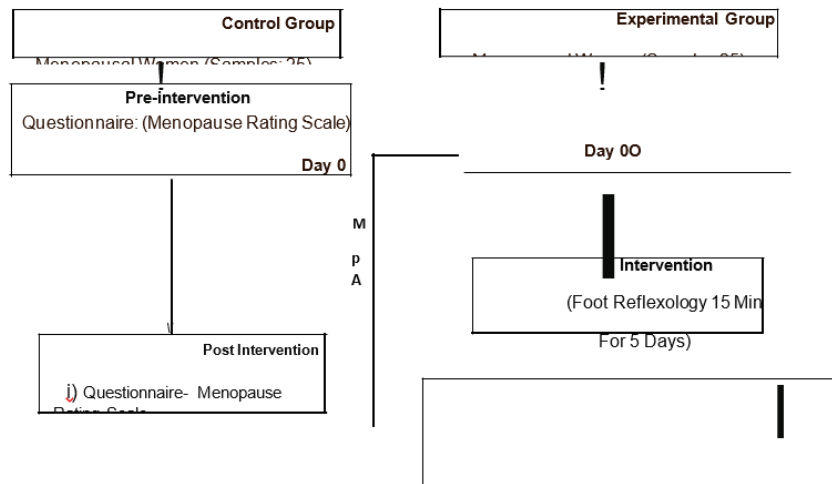


Figure 1 Flow chart of research Process

Setting of the Study:

The study was conducted in homes of the selected samples residing in Mumbai.

Sample:

In the present study; the total sample size was 50 which was divided among two groups.

Sample Size: 50 (25 in experimental and 25 in control group)

Criteria for Sample Selection:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Women who have attained menopause for periods not more than 5 years.
- Women who are willing to participate.
- Women who can read and write in Marathi Hindi, and English
- Women present at the time of data collection.

Exclusion Criteria:

Menstruating women or women who have irregular periods.

Illiterate women.

Menopausal women who are on hormonal treatment or any other alternative treatment for menopause.

Sampling Technique: Nonprobability snowball technique

Tool And Technique:

Development of the Tool:

Based on the objectives of the study; the tool consisted of standardized scales for assessing the menopausal symptoms and anxiety and an opinionnaire to evaluate the feedback of foot reflexology.

The tool consisted of 4 sections:

Section A: This contained questions to find out the demographic profile

Section B: Standard menopause rating scale : To assess severity of symptoms in menopause

Section C: Opinion regarding foot reflexology.

The menopausal symptoms will be scored from 0 -4 (None, Mild, Moderate, Severe and Very severe) using the standardized menopausal rating scale.

Technique: Self reporting

Pilot Study:

The pilot study was undertaken for assessing the reliability, validity, feasibility and practicability of the research. The tool was found to be valid and reliable. (0.75)

Data Collection:

The researchers conducted a survey and identified the women who had attained menopause and who consented to be a part of the study.

The first 25 subjects were assigned in control group and the next 25 in the experimental group.

In the control group; the data was collected in the following manner: The researchers after obtaining the consent; administered the questionnaire to the women and they were thanked for participating in the study.

In the experimental group; the researchers after obtaining the consent; administered the questionnaire and obtained the data required prior to the intervention. Later; the researchers provided foot reflexology to the samples for 15 minutes daily. This was performed continuously for 5 days.

Once the foot reflexology was given for 5 days; the researchers again collected the data using the same questionnaire to assess the menopausal score of the women.

The researchers also assessed the opinion regarding the foot reflexology and thanked the women for consenting to be a part of the study.

Findings of The Study:

TABLE I Demographic Profile of The Menopausal Women N=50

Demographic profile		Control group N=25		Experimental group N=25	
		Frequency F	Percentage (%)	Frequency F	Percentage (%)
Age (Yrs)	45-50	11	44	12	48
	51-55	10	40	9	36
	56-60	3	12	4	16
	61 and more	1	4	0	0
Education	Primary	16	64	13	52
	secondary	7	28	7	28
	Higher secondary	2	8	5	20
Marital Status	Married	23	92	23	92
	Unmarried	0	0	2	8
	Widow	2	8	0	0
Attainment of	Less than 6 month	2	8	2	8

Menopause	7 month - 1 year	5	20	9	36
	1 year-3 year	11	44	11	44
	3 year -5 year	7	28	3	12

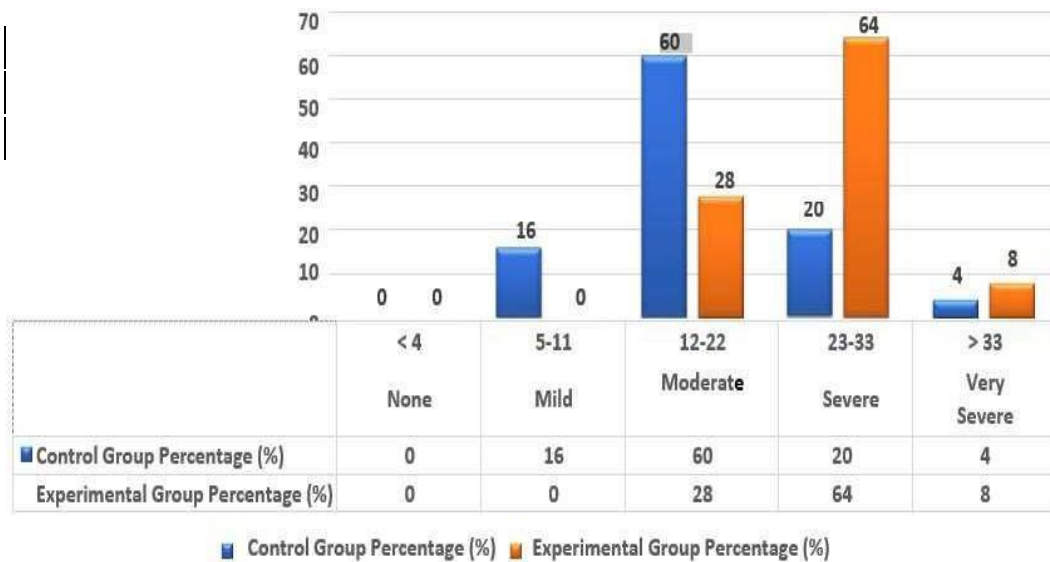


Figure -2 Comparison Of Menopausal Rating Score in Control And Experimental Group before Foot Reflexology

It is evident that the experimental group had high percentage of severe to very severe stress(72%) compared to control group (24%) who experienced severe to very severe stress.

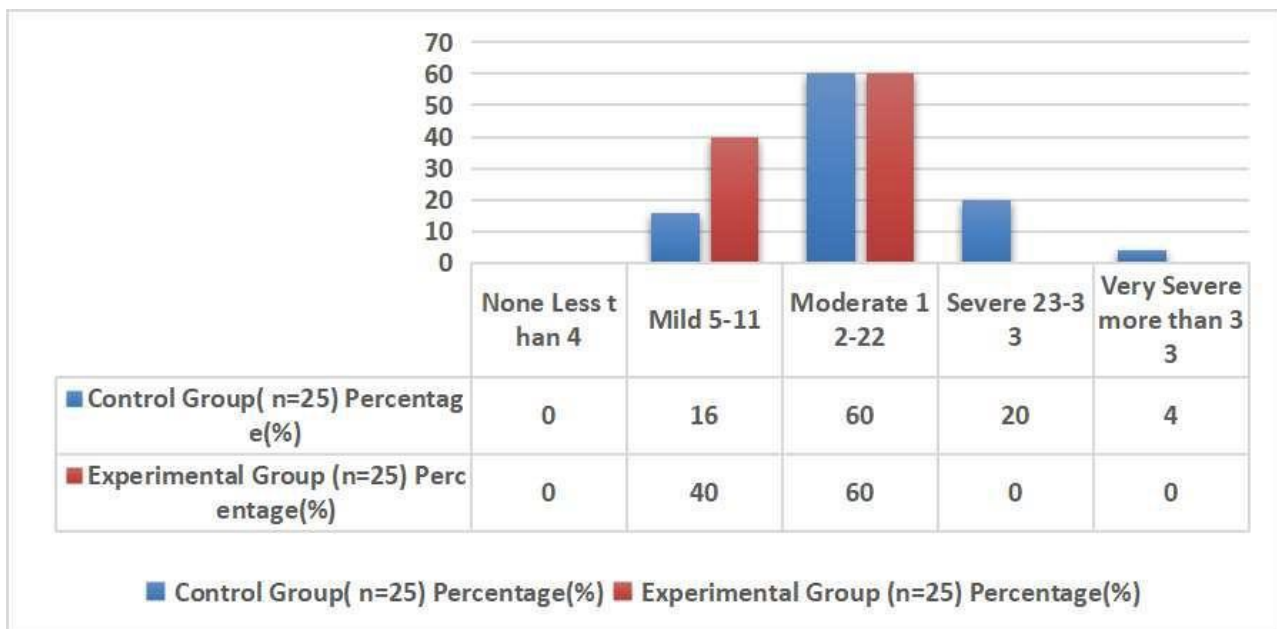


Figure 3 Comparison Of Menopausal Rating Score in Control and Experimental Group After Foot Reflexology

Above table shows that in control group 24 % of women had severe to very severe menopausal score compared to women in experimental group.

Table II Impact Of Foot Reflexology on Menopausal Score Among Women In Experimental Group

	Mean(M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	T Value	P Value
Before Intervention	17.6	5.8	7.3	P<0.001 (Highly Significant)
After Intervention	10.6	3.1		

It is evident from table II that foot reflexology had impact on reducing the menopausal score in experimental group..

Table III Impact of Foot Reflexology on Menopausal Score Among Women In Experimental And Control Group

	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	P value	Significance
Control group	16.4	3.2	4.165	P value less than Table Value(6.509). HO is Rejected
Experimental Group	10.6	3.1		

Above table shows that the mean of menopausal score in control group was 16.4, while in experimental group it was 10.6 after foot reflexology.

As the P value 4.165 is less than the table value 6.509, H₀ is rejected. Thus, the study reveals that foot reflexology was effective in reducing the menopausal score.

Figure 4: Opinion of Menopausal women regarding Foot reflexology

Figure 4 indicates that the women liked the foot reflexology,

Limitations:

The foot reflexology was only provided for a period of 5 days for a small sample size and hence, the findings cannot be generalized.

Snowball technique was used for sampling, which resulted in setting of the study being different for every sample.

The subjectivity of women cannot be ruled out as questions included perceptions.

The research involved a group of researchers who provided foot reflexology and hence, procedure standardization may have been affected.

Post intervention findings of menopausal rating and anxiety score for the control group were not assessed.

Nursing implications:

The present study conducted on impact of foot reflexology on menopause and anxiety has important implications in nursing. The implications are for Nursing education, Service, management and research.

Nursing Service:

The study demonstrates the need for initiating a separate OPD for looking at menopausal problems. The Menopausal woman requires care, support and relaxation to face the menopausal hormonal changes. Nurses could be taught foot reflexology as a means for providing comfort to menopausal women. Nursing service could prepare pamphlets to create mass awareness regarding menopause, its effects and ways to cope the changes along with providing range of options for relaxation.

The nursing service could be extended to community to render better care to women in the community. Surveys in community of menopausal women could be used to identify women suffering from menopause. The Menopausal standardized scale could be used as a protocol in every hospital for women over 45 years.

Nursing Education:

Nursing education is a means through which we prepare the next generation of nurses. Menopause, as a pertinent topic should be given emphasis in the nursing curriculum. The students should be sensitized to use the scales to detect the effect of menopause and identify anxiety.

. The novice nurses should be taught and provided value added courses in alternative therapies such as foot reflexology to provide comfort to the patients.

Surveys of menopausal women can be undertaken as community projects for enhancing community health.

Nursing Management:

The management and hospital administrators should ensure that all nurses in gynecology ward and OPD are provided training in identifying menopausal problems. The menopausal

scale assessment could be added in the gynecology ward for women over 45 years. The hospital could create various preventive, promotive services for taking care of women during and after menopause.

Nursing Research:

The present study has important implications for further research based on the limitations. The researcher has suggested the following areas for further research.

Recommendations for Further Research:

A similar study could be undertaken using a large, randomized sample; so that generalization is possible.

A similar study by assessing post intervention score of menopause in control group could be used to assess the impact by comparing it with the experimental group.

A longitudinal study could be undertaken of women during pre and post menopause to assess the menopausal score.

A comparative study of different relaxation techniques could be done to identify the best possible intervention to manage menopause.

A study to assess effect of foot reflexology on pam in various medical and surgical conditions could be undertaken.

An exploratory study to assess the effect of menopause on quality of life could be undertaken.

2. CONCLUSION:

The study showed that menopausal women get affected due to menopausal changes. They develop hot flushes, insomnia etc as a result of these menopausal changes. This also causes anxiety. The study revealed that relaxation and diversion will help reduce the effect of Menopause. The study showed that foot reflexology had a positive impact in reducing the menopausal symptoms.

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