Always Menopause Survey Netherlands

Results

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Background and objective of the survey

In August and September 2022, a quantitative study was carried out among a representative sample of women aged 40 to 60 years. A total of 979 women were questioned about their experience with menopause.

The age of the respondents was taken into account when drawing the sample. All respondents fell into the age group 40-49 and 50-60 years old. A total of 1449 completed surveys were obtained, of which 979 respondents are in their menopause. This number is large enough to make reliable statements per age category and to be able to make a comparison between the various categories.

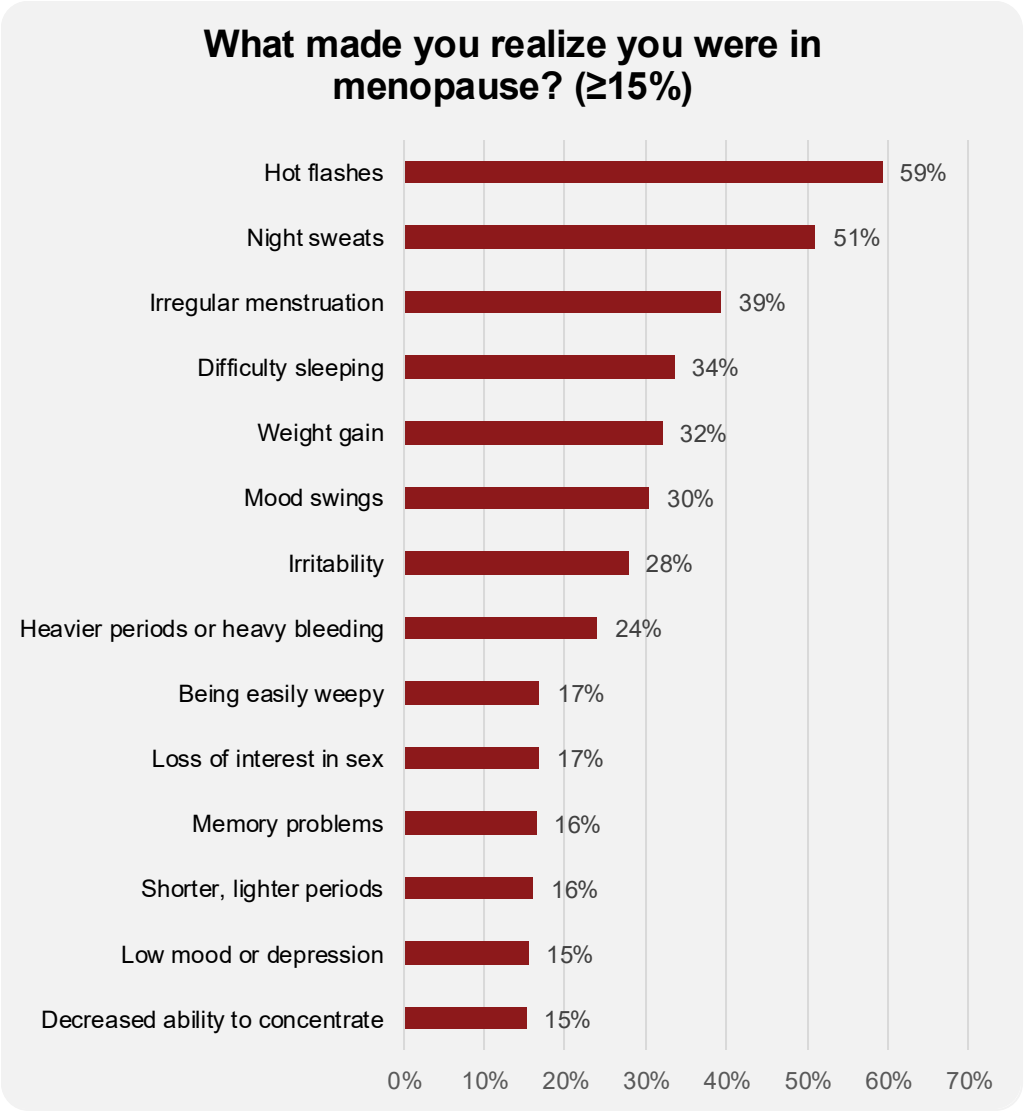
From the survey it can be determined:

- What the most common side effects of menopause are
- If women are informed well enough about menopause
- How much time there is on average between the first symptoms and knowing they are in their menopause
- How many women are misdiagnosed
- What can be done to create a better experience for women in their menopause

Number of respondents per age category	
40 - 49	236
50 - 60	743
Total	**979**

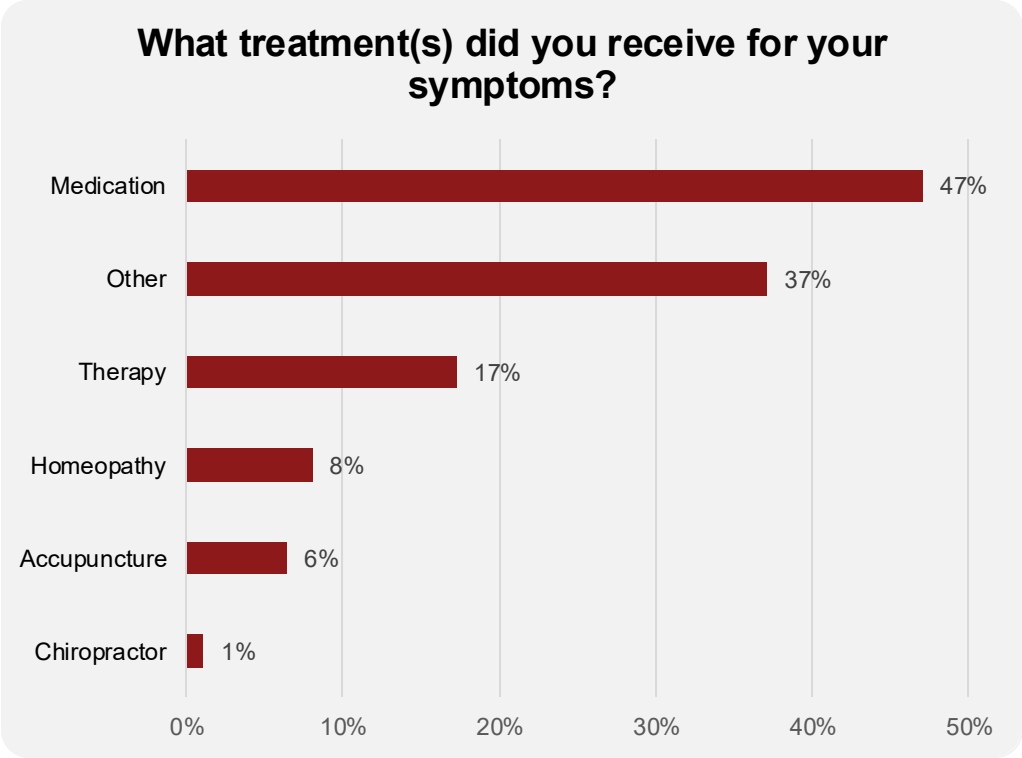
General findings

- The results show that on average, women experience their first symptoms of menopause at the age of 48 years old.
- 71% of the respondents realized they were in menopause because they recognized the symptoms themselves, while other discovered they were in menopause because of a professional diagnosis, a talk with a friend or by searching the internet.
- 55% of the respondents realized within six months that they were in menopause.
- For 6% of the respondents, it took longer than two years before they realized they were in their menopause.
- The symptoms that were most recognized as being due to menopause are hot flashes, weight gain, heavier period, trouble sleeping, sweating at nights, mood swings and irritability.



Misdiagnosis

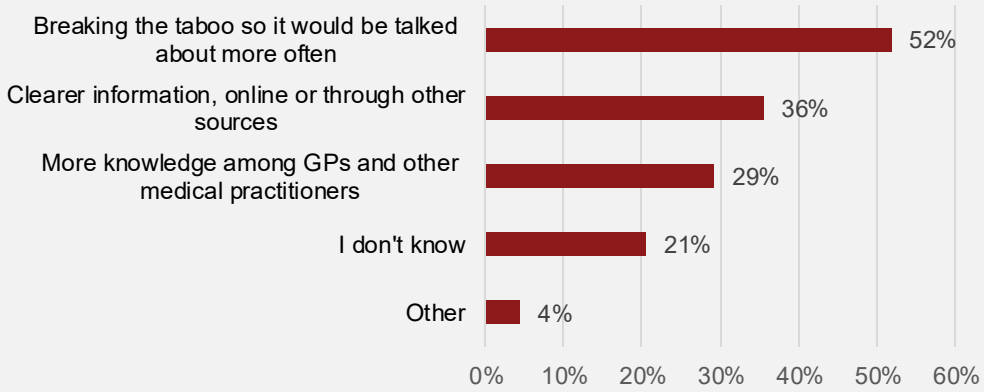
- The most common first symptoms of menopause are hot flashes, irregular period, nightly sweating and heavier periods, which are partly also the most recognized symptoms of menopause.
- Shockingly, almost 1 in every 10 women (9%) are misdiagnosed before finding out they are in their menopause. This means that 1 in every 10 women gets treatment for something different than what they should be treated for. 8% of the participants already received treatment for their symptoms before finding out they are due to menopause.
- Most common diagnoses were: Burnout, depression, no diagnosis (you made it up), slow thyroid and stress.
- From this group, almost half (47%) receive medication for their symptoms.
- One respondent said: “The only thing my GP told me is that once my period stopped, I knew for certain I was in menopause.”
- Another respondent said: “Because I look young, my GP didn’t believe I was in menopause”
- “The GP believed I was depressed and prescribed me anti-depressive.



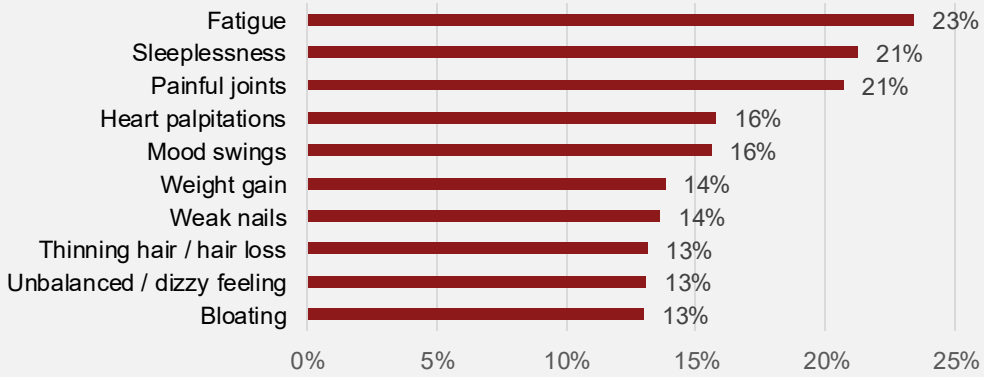
Recognizing Menopause

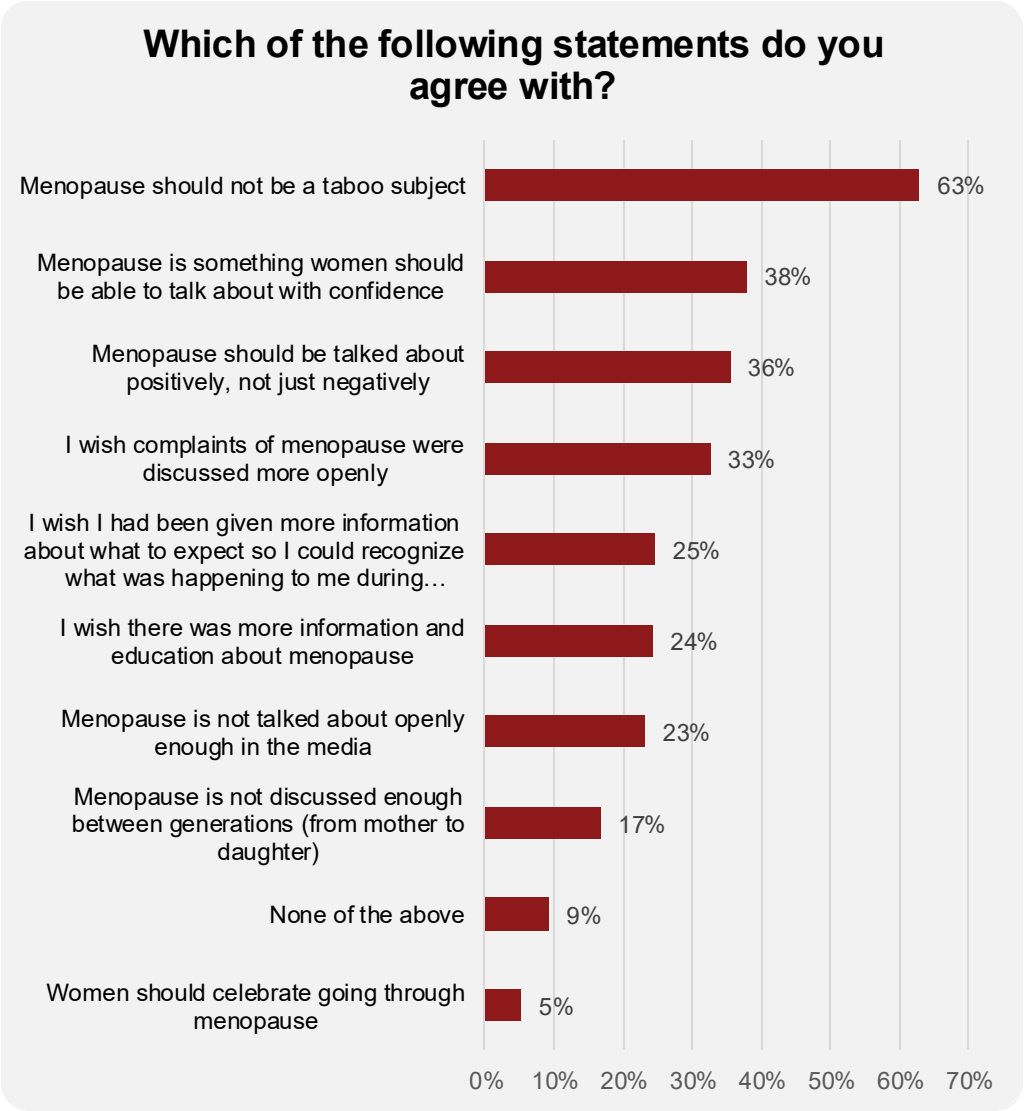
- The symptoms most often not recognized as menopause symptoms are sleeplessness, tiredness and aching joints.
- The most important change that can be made to create more awareness around menopause and to better prepare women for menopause, is to break the taboo around the topic (52%). This way, menopause is more often discussed, and symptoms can more quickly be recognized.
- Sleeplessness (22%), tiredness (23%), mood swings (20%), palpitations (23%), weight gain (18%) and aching joints (21%) are the most common symptoms women wished they knew about before experiencing them.

What do you think can be done to raise awareness and better prepare women for menopause?



Which of the following symptoms did you not realize were symptoms of menopause when they occurred to you? (≥13%)



Loss of self-confidence

- It is evident that a change in the openness and information on the topic is necessary in order to better prepare women for menopause. 63% indicated that menopause shouldn't be a taboo, 25% stated they wished there was more information available about what to expect and how to recognize symptoms and 38% indicated that menopause is something that should be open for discussion and empower women.
- Almost half of the respondents (45%) said they would feel more self-confident if they knew how to handle menopause.
- 1 in every 3 women stated that they weren't prepared well enough for menopause to know what to expect.
- 1 in every 5 women was at one point frustrated by the lack of information on menopause.