

## THE PERSPECTIVE OF ASIAN WOMEN TOWARDS MENOPAUSE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

I A Paramitha<sup>1\*</sup>, R Nuzuliana<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Health Science Magister Program 'Aisyiyah University of Yogyakarta, Siliwangi Street, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Health Science Magister Program 'Aisyiyah University of Yogyakarta, Siliwangi Street, Yogyakarta, Indonesia <sup>3</sup>Afiliasi Penulis 3

\*corresponding author : azkiaintan@yahoo.com

### Abstract

Perspective towards menopause is different among women in the world. Their perspectives are based on their faith in reproductive values, language used in describing and discussing menopause, strong cultural impacts, various knowledge level, and holistic perspectives combining spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional dimensions. Menopause period which is not handled properly by a good comprehension level will decrease life quality. The Systematic Literature Review aimed to investigate the length of perspectives on menopause according to Asian women related to socio-cultural and spiritual aspects. The Systematic Literature Review employed the PubMed database from 2008 – 2018. From 1758 articles that had been identified, 10 articles were fulfilling the criteria of inclusion. The roles of culture in menopausal women's perspective had a great impact on women's lives and the roles of spirituality on menopause play an important role in every Asian women's act. It is also revealed that the development of health service especially for menopausal women in Asia had been made and thus, there were still many women who had not been empowered in their menopausal period. There were still many Asian women who had not possessed awareness and knowledge on menopause physiology. The culture regards that it was a taboo to discuss menopausal complaints and thus, it created fear of negative stigmatization from the environment. The role of health and family support personnel is needed in the menopause period.

**Keywords:** perspective, asian women, menopause

### 1. INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization (WHO) stated that the explosion of menopause in the next near years will be very hard to be prevented and it is predicted that in 2030 there will be 1.2 billion women aged above 50 years old. Most of the (approximately 80%) live in a developing country, and every year menopause women population increase by 3%. It means that women's health needs to take care of so that it can increase life expectancy and achieve happiness and psychological welfare [1]. The number of menopause women in Asia in 2025 will be 373 million. Recently in the United States of America more than 32 million women are menopause. The average age having menopause in the United States of America is 50-52 years old, but in several cases, it happens earlier or later. The time of menopause cannot be determined precisely. Most case of menopause occurs in women above 50 years old, but it is not zero probability that it happens earlier or later [2]. A survey in Asia Pacific Country conducted in April 2013 record that 68% of menopause women experience climacteric, but only 62% of them who care about the symptom [3]. According to Pittsburg (in Maria, 2011), it was obtained the result as 80.9% of menopause women in the world do not understand about menopause. Someone who understands about menopause will understand how to take care when menopause change occurs. From the study conducted by Maria (2011) about menopause in Jendi village, Selogiri Subdistrict, Wonogiri regency, 10 people aged 40-50 years, 3 people aged 51 years and 2 people aged 55 years old, they stated that the health program related to menopause had not seriously taken care, for example, the absence of health education or proliferation about women facing menopause carried out by Health Center. Reproduction health

program facilitated by the health center is still limited about pregnancy checking, baby birth, and family planning service. Besides, from an interview of 10 people of pre-menopause and menopause women, it was known that they had not understood about menopause and the following symptom and did not understand the cause of the symptom they feel [4]. This systematic Literature Review is to achieve a broader understanding of how the perspective of menopause according to Asian women. To depict and to understand these differences can help in giving health care by the culture which in the end will help to improve life quality during the menopause transition period.

**2. METHODS**

The author screened 1758 literature from a database (Pubmed) to be reviewed. All chosen articles used a qualitative research method that has a Scopus index with standard Q1 and Q2. Formulation of Systematic Literature Review was following the steps of Systematic Literature Review. The steps of Systematic Literature Review are 1) Problem Identification, 2) making priority of problem and question, 3) using framework, 4) literature searching by using database, manual searching or grey literature, 5) choosing paper based on inclusion and exclusion criteria., 6) doing critical appraisal, 7) extracting data from chosen paper, 8) collecting data and make mapping to answer the question.

This review specifically has the purpose to find out: how the perspective of Asian women in encountering menopause? Whether socio-cultural affect women adaptation in Asia in becoming menopause and whether the spiritual condition is affecting in determining the perspective of Asian women in encountering menopause? The framework used is PEOS (Population, Exposure/ event, Outcomes, and Study design).

Tabel 1. Framework Research Question

<i>Element</i>	<i>Inclusion</i>	<i>Exclusion</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
<i>Population</i>	<i>Menopause Menopausal Climacteric Premenopause Postmenopause</i>	<i>Menopause had a history of premature menopause, hysterectomy or oophorectomy or history of hormonal replacement therapy.</i>	<i>The perspective of Menopause women</i>
<i>Exposure/Event</i>	<i>Culture Belief Attitude Experience Knowledge</i>		<i>Women's age was 42–55 years old</i>
<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Good Quality of Life of Menopausal Women</i>		
<i>Study Design</i>	<i>Exploratory study; Descriptive Qualitative; Historical Research; Grounded Theory; Cross- Cultural Study</i>		<i>Qualitative method</i>

Three steps of strategy in searching was used. The first step was searching on limited scope in Pubmed, which enable to analyze of the words contain in the title and abstract. The term of searching was menopause, "menopausal" and "climacteric". The next step was by using all the identified keywords. All keyword has been searched in Pubmed and Scopus. The third step was the reference list from all report and identified article was searched for additional study. In searching one database and reference list it was obtained the number of 1758 articles, after being screened for its relevance it was obtained 30 articles. Article screening was conducted to find out the appropriate and complete reference about its hydrotherapy affectivity toward the decrease of giving birth pain and 10 articles were found.

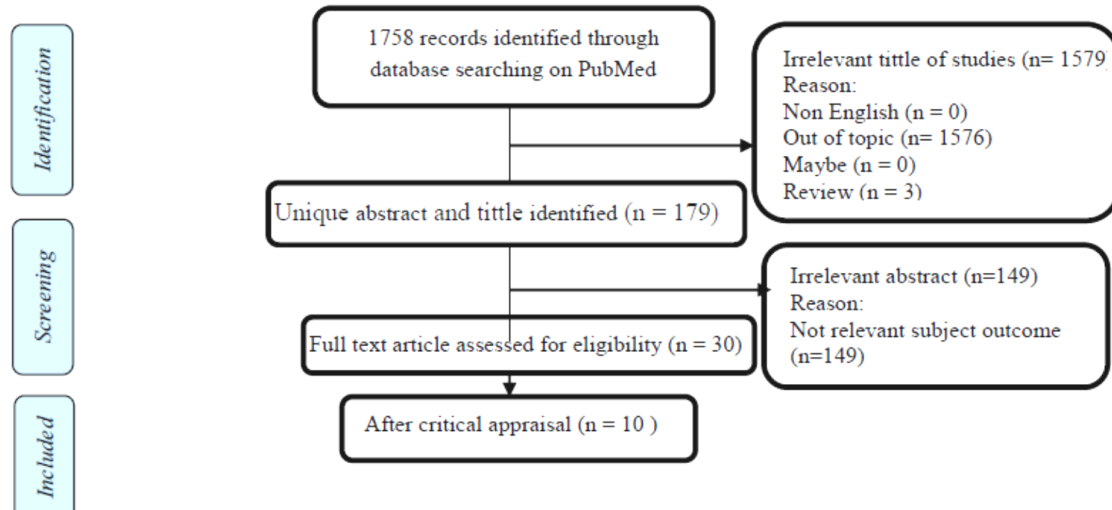


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The author did a critical appraisal use checklist from the tools of The Critical Appraisals Skills Program (CASP) from CASP UK. After conducting critical appraisal, 10 articles were chosen based on author assessment that they had good quality in accordance with the topic, data extraction was the carried out to input key criteria such as title, author, year of publishing, the location of study, the purpose of research, methodology, research population, and significant result or conclusion.

Table 2. Data Extraction

No	Title / Author /Year/ Value	Country	Aim	Types of research	Data collection	Particip ants	Result
1.	I should live and finish it ": A qualitative inquiry into Turkish women's menopause experience / Serap Cifcili / 2009 / Value A	Turkey	to explore the perception of Turkish women about menopause and HT and provides important recommendatio ns about the needs and expectations of menopausal	Qualitati ve (Explorat ive studies)	The data collectio n method used is purposiv e sampling with in-depth semistru ctured intervie	16	Most participants defined menopause as a natural transition process to be followed. Plus they feel their hygiene, maturity, comfort does not menstruate again, while the negative they feel flushes, the older and difficulty in relating. Osteoporosis is an

			women to health workers		ws.		important concern for most participants. To cope with the symptoms of menopause, the non-pharmacological choice is preferred.
2.	Are post-menopausal women "half-a-man" sexual?: beliefs, attitudes, and concerns among midlife Chinese women / Davina Ling et al / 2008 / Value A	China	To determine the relationship between sexual behavior with female menopause and its impact on the Chinese Mainland. To recommend health policy also aims to examine the factors that can affect their desire to seek medical help related to sexual problems.	Qualitative (Grounded Theory)	The method used is purposive sampling with a focus group discussion	27	Many informants expressed concerns about their husbands who are looking for an affair to satisfy the sexual needs that are not met. The custom was to discuss sexuality and the fear of stigmatization present a barrier to seeking medical help for Chinese women. On the one hand, the informants expressed a desire to face sexual problems related to other health problems with medical assistance. On the other hand, the fact that most informants expressed doubts about raising sexual issues as a topic of discussion with peers.
3.	The hopeless age? A qualitative exploration of the experience of menopause in Arab women in Qatar / M. Murphy et al / 2013 / Value A	Qatar	To describe and explore the expectations and experiences of women menopausal transition Arabs living in Qatar.	Qualitative (Grounded Theory)	Purposive sampling technique with Focus Group Discussion and semistructured	41 participants	The majority of women consider menopause as a growing experience, although the term 'menopause' is considered to have a negative connotation. Postmenopausal women describe the symptoms of menopause in line with the level of knowledge, but many premenopausal women notice no symptoms,

							<p>even when they are going through menopause.</p> <p>Postmenopausal women more socially active than before and able to participate in religious activities previously they could not attend during menstruation. How a woman experiences menopause depends on the level of support of her husband, and some participants believed that Western women do not have good support from her husband and family than with the Arab woman; they feel a lack of support his negative can cause menopause person could even lead to suicide because of depression during menopause.</p>
4.	A qualitative study on menopause Described from the man's perspective / Hidiroglu Seyhan et al / 2014 / Value B	Turkey	To know the perception of Turkish men about menopause, understanding the ins and outs of menopause and its implications in women's lives so that it can be a recommendation for health workers in helping women and their husbands with menopause.	Qualitative (Descriptive) qualitative	Snowball sampling method with an in-depth interview	33 Participants	<p>Participants do not have basic knowledge about menstruation and menopause. Most participants define menopause as the loss of fecundity (ability to reproduce), weight gain, and loss of beauty. None of the participants had heard about the available treatments for menopause.</p>
5.	Age of despair or age of hope?	Palestine	To understand how women in	Qualitative	Snowball sampling	35 participants	<p>Most women define menopause as a natural</p>

	Palestinian women's perspectives on midlife health / Doaa Hammoudeh et al / 2017 / Value A	the West Bank (Palestine) understand, experience, and manage their health in middle age.	(Historic al Studies)	technique and purposive sampling with in-depth life-history interviews	nts	process. Various terms and expressions vary according to marital status and the status of the mother. In addressing the health problems of middle-aged women used a variety of ways. For women who have never married or had children, health services there doing social exclusion.
6.	Knowledge, attitudes, and practices associated with menopause: a multi-ethnic, qualitative study in Singapore / Sandra Mackey et al / 2014 / Value A	Singapore to find out how women experience menopausal symptoms, attitudes, and beliefs associated with menopause experience, and knowledge of them, particularly the socio-cultural factors, which affect the experience of women in Singapore.	Qualitative (Eksploratif studies)	The data collection method used is purposive sampling with in-depth semistructured interviews.	58 participants	Women from all three ethnic describe the attitude of acceptance toward menopause and changes. Although they know the importance of information related to menopause, they do not seek information about menopause and there is the assumption that health workers do not perform any role in helping to problems that arise.
7.	"Adopting self-sacrifice": how Iranian women cope with sexual problems during the menopausal transition? An exploratory qualitative study / Narjes Bahri et al / 2017 / Value A	Iran This study aims to explore ways of menopausal women to face the menopausal transition among Iranian women.	Qualitative (Exploratif studies)	The data collection method used is purposive sampling with in-depth semistructured interviews.	21 participants	Analysis of the data shows a decrease in female libido and an inability to satisfy the sexual needs of the husband. But they still carry out compliance in sexual relations, apply compassion by religious advice, and submit their right to achieve mutual understanding, even though the women experience many

							symptoms of menopause that they could not overcome.
8.	Menopause: a qualitative study of Jordanian women's perceptions / Mahadeen et al / 2008 / Value A	Jordan	to describe the perception of menopause in middle-aged women of Jordan and their assessment of the provision of health care for them.	Qualitative (descriptive qualitative)	Snowball sampling technique and purposive sampling with in-depth interviews	25 participants	All participants looked at menopause as a normal transition in their lives. Women obtain information about the process of menopause on female family members, friends, media, reading and health care providers. Women using makeshift knowledge through the menopausal transition.
9.	Tales of the second spring: menopause in Turkey through the narratives of menopausal women and gynecologists / Maral Erol/ 2009 / Value B	Turkey	to inform women since the early age of onset of menopause called second life, and to make women aware that undergo this period should remain healthy and happy without sacrificing the quality of their lives.	Qualitative (Cross-Cultural Studies)	Purposive sampling technique with Focus Group Discussion and semistructured	52 participants (32 female menopause, 20 doctors)	Menopause health care is a relatively new phenomenon, which originated and was formed in the context of Northern and Western European culture. Interaction between modernization, globalization, femininity, and women's health makes Turkey hopes the parallels between menopause services in Europe and Turkey as told by participants.
10.	The menopause transition experiences of Chinese Singaporean women: an exploratory qualitative study / Hui-Koon Lim et al / 2012 / Value A	Singapore	to explore and gain insight into the experience of the menopause transition ethnic Chinese women in Singapore	Qualitative (Eksploratif studies)	The data collection method used is purposive sampling with in-depth semistructured interviews.	14 participants	Two main themes were identified: (a) symptoms and (b) managing the symptoms during the menopausal transition. The most widely experienced symptom is abnormal bleeding, hot flushes, and emotional changes. The strategy used women to manage their transition is to use the medical intervention of Western

and traditional Chinese  
and seeking support  
from family and  
friends.

---

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1. Asian Women Perspective toward menopause**

A study of Alidoosti (2012) stated that menopause as "natural transitional period". "Natural" is defined as the time indeed happens but it is not easy to be faced, this phenomenon was related to menopause symptoms [5]. Meanwhile, they only know it in a glance from television, magazine or pamphlet in the health centers. Books, magazines, and pamphlets are the most common information source that cannot give complete and comprehensive knowledge. The members of three ethnic groups describe the acceptance act when menopause transition and the anxiety about menopause arise [6]. According to Bahri, et al (2008) that their friend's experiences were the which become information sources about menopause, including symptoms, complication, sexual intercourse changing and ways to handle the sexual problem in the transition period. In the system of the health of Iran, is not no care organized which is provided for the period of menopause and post-menopause and media are not too attention to the problem is. By because it was, the woman essentially not find the source of the information other than from a friend their and women who experienced menopause around them. The most commonly mentioned symptom is abnormal bleeding. Bleeding abnormal categorized into two types: (a) the bleeding heavy that prolonged and (b) a period of not regularly which involves a change interval, duration, and/or amount. [7].

#### **3.2. The role of culture in menopause women perspective**

According to Ling, et al (2008) China is still holding the stereotype that women are responsible for their sexual activity, the problem they face is their responsibility. The culture of reluctance to discuss sexuality and women's worries upon stigma becomes the hindrance to find health care for menopause women in china. In the other side, most of the informant stated about their reluctance in raising the sexual issue as a discussion topic with peers because of strong culture effect [8]. Mahadeen, et al (2008) mention that culturally there are many similarities between Qatari and non-Qatari women who are Asian culture, both groups believe that they are different from Western women regarding religion and family support when experiencing menopause. Regarding religion, the point is that religion is also a way of life for Asian women, whereas in the West religion is merely a belief in the existence of God but all of them still prioritize their logic and liberal life. Whereas the difference in family support is that family support in Asia is better because of the customs and social life in Asia that are so closely related to a sense of togetherness and kinship. Some women believe that Western women do not have good support from their husbands and family compared to the support that Qatari women get during menopause, and they assume that lack of support can lead to negative results, as explained earlier [10].

#### **3.3. The role of religion in menopause women perspective**

The role of religion toward menopause exists in the journal. According to Murphy et al, (2013) for Arabic women, menopause experience was strongly related to religion. Religion also played an important role, in which women see it as a protection factor to help them facing stress in a transitional period. The result of the interview several groups, women believed that religion had one hope about life acceptance, which can prevent the possibility of depression such as suicide.

Meanwhile in the western country, if a woman reaches menopause age there were a lot of attempts carried out to prevent aging. One of those was hormone therapy. Because of the culture, there was not affected by family support such as Asia. Women in the western country were prone to stress (particularly in entering menopause period in which there is a hormone declining and cause emotion stability) so that it causes depression and want to do suicide [9]. Mackey et al (2014) say that women from each of the three ethnic groups (Malay, Indian and Chinese) get strength from their religion and prayer in overcoming the symptoms they experience during the menopause transition. Strategies to solve sexual problems in some women by using the Prophet's love and sunnah. The experience of the participants shows that some women try to give love and love to their husbands who are always taught by religion and this can overcome problems in sexual relations. Sincere affection and devotion to their husbands make them strong in the face of menopausal symptoms [7].

Most women were aware of the sign and symptoms of menopause. Postmenopause women describe menopause symptoms were related to knowledge, such as hot flush, fatigue and mood changes, but many menopause women did not realize the symptom. There are a lot of them did not comfortable with the term of menopause because they assumed that it is a difficult life phase [10]. In Arab, menopause is assumed as "age with no hope" and most women did not see this period as time without hope. In contrast, most women see it as a period of maturity and wisdom which has a positive aspect. Menopause was one of the factors in the life stage. However other perspective assumed that this is a difficult time in which menopause had to be faced [9]. The influence of culture was very strong in affecting Asian women's experience. Culture can give a positive effect on action and understanding that menopause is a period that has to be faced happily. However, culture also has a role as a hindrance to Asian women an issue considers taboo to be discussed [8]. The culture considered "taboo" to discuss menopause symptoms gives worries about negative stigma so that it hinders women to find health service. Therefore social and culture value assessment is potential as a hindrance to their ability in finding social support in facing menopause symptoms, especially sexual problem activity in marriage. The majority (90%) of women stated that they did not want to talk with peers even a close friend about menopause particularly about a sexual issue they had. Even for those who study in the medical field, they don't like to discuss such issues and consider that discussion about menopause with friends as something "taboo". They are worried to be judged by others, including discussing it with their couple. They worried about the negative stigma that they accept [8]. The religion also plays an important supporting role, in which women see it as protecting factors to help them in encountering stress in the transitional period. Women believed that religion gives hope about life acceptance, which can prevent the possibility of depression such as suicide, meanwhile in western countries if a woman is in a menopause period she tends to have depression and do suicide. Menopause affects each woman, Asian women have better understanding compared to western women. In western countries, there was no spiritual or religion believes to stop their actions [7]. Women from ethnicity groups (Malay, India, and china) also had strength form prayer in overcoming the symptom during the menopause transition. The strategy to solve the sexual problem on several women is by "affection" and prophet edict. The experience of women shows that several women give their love and affection to the husband which always taught by religion and those values can overcome the problem in sexual intercourse. Sincere affection and obedience to the husband make them strong to face menopause symptoms [11]. The worries expressed by several women, that their husband can remarry, which creates anxiety increase about aging and bad self-esteem; therefore husband reaction is very important because it will determine whether menopause will be positive or negative perspective [5].

This finding is following the study which shows that the relationship between women's difficulties in facing menopause and marriage satisfaction; the husband had plays important role in experiencing menopause and consider the important role of the husband which ideally helps their wives [12]. The development of health care specifically for menopause women in Asia is not as good as another continent. For example in Europe, the health service especially for menopause women had been integrated and systemized well. This condition makes Asian women had difficulties getting proper service and sufficient information related to their complaints that they feel. Although they know about the importance related to menopause, they do not looking for information related to menopause and there is an assumption that health personnel does not do any role in helping the problem arise. There are so many clinics, but especially for menopause, there are not many clinics that know it. [13].

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

It needs more study about the transitional phase of menopause in Asian women to improve Asian women's understanding of managing the transitional phase of menopause and gave specific health care related to menopause which relevant and suitable for the culture. Therefore the discussion about menopause will not be a taboo issue for Asian women.

#### **REFERENCES**

- [1] Nadine & Prajogo, S., 2009. *How Lovely Facing Menopause*. Yogyakarta: Locus.
- [2] Mulyani, S., 2013. *Late Menopause Menstrual Cycle in Women in the Middle Ages*. Yogyakarta: Nuha Medika.
- [3] Aqila, 2010. *Happy at the age of menopause*. Yogyakarta: A Plus Books
- [4] Maria, T., 2011. Effect of Health Education on Knowledge and Anxiety in Women Pre Menopause Village Selogiri Jendi District of Wonogiri. *Medicine, I* (2), p. 18.
- [5] Alidoosti, K., Abbaszadeh, A., & Hosseininasab, A. (2012). A qualitative inquiry into women's menopausal experiences in southeastern Iran. *Menopause International*, 18 (1), 28-29. <https://doi.org/10.1258/mi.2011.011117>
- [6] Bahri, N., Latifnejad Roudsari, R., & Azimi Hashemi, M. (2017). "Adopting self-sacrifice": how Iranian women cope with sexual problems during the menopausal transition? An exploratory qualitative study. *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 38 (3), 180-188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0167482X.2016.1216962>
- [7] Mackey, S., Teo, SSH, Dramusic, V., Lee, HK, & Boughton, M. (2014). Knowledge, attitudes, and practices associated with menopause: a multi-ethnic, qualitative study in Singapore. *Health Care for Women International*, 35 (5), 512-528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2013.801482>
- [8] Ling, DCY, Wong, WCW, & Ho, SC (2008). Are post-menopausal women "half-a-man" sexual?: beliefs, attitudes, and concerns among Chinese midlife women. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 34 (1), 15-29
- [9] Murphy, MM, Verjee, MA, Bener, A., & Gerber, LM (2013). The hopeless age? A qualitative exploration of the experience of menopause in Arab women in Qatar. *Climacteric: The Journal of the International Menopause Society*, 16 (5), 550-554. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13697137.2013.771330>
- [10] Mahadeen, AI, Halabi, JO, & Callister, LC (2008). Menopause: a qualitative study of Jordanian women's perceptions. *International Nursing Review*, 55 (4), 427-433. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2008.00662.x>

- [11] Erol, M. (2009). Tales of the second spring: menopause in Turkey through the narratives of menopausal women and gynecologists. *Medical Anthropology*
- [12] Kransdorf, LN, Files, JA, & Mayer, AP (2016). Care of Women During Menopause. *Journal of Women's Health* (2002), 25 (1), 11-14. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2015.5646>
- [13] Yangin, HB, Kukululu, K., & Sozer, GA (2010). The Perception of Menopause Among Turkish Women. *Journal of Women and Aging; London*, 22 (4), 290