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A STUDY OF EDUCATION, PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS MENOPAUSE ON THE ISLE OF MAN



INTRODUCTION

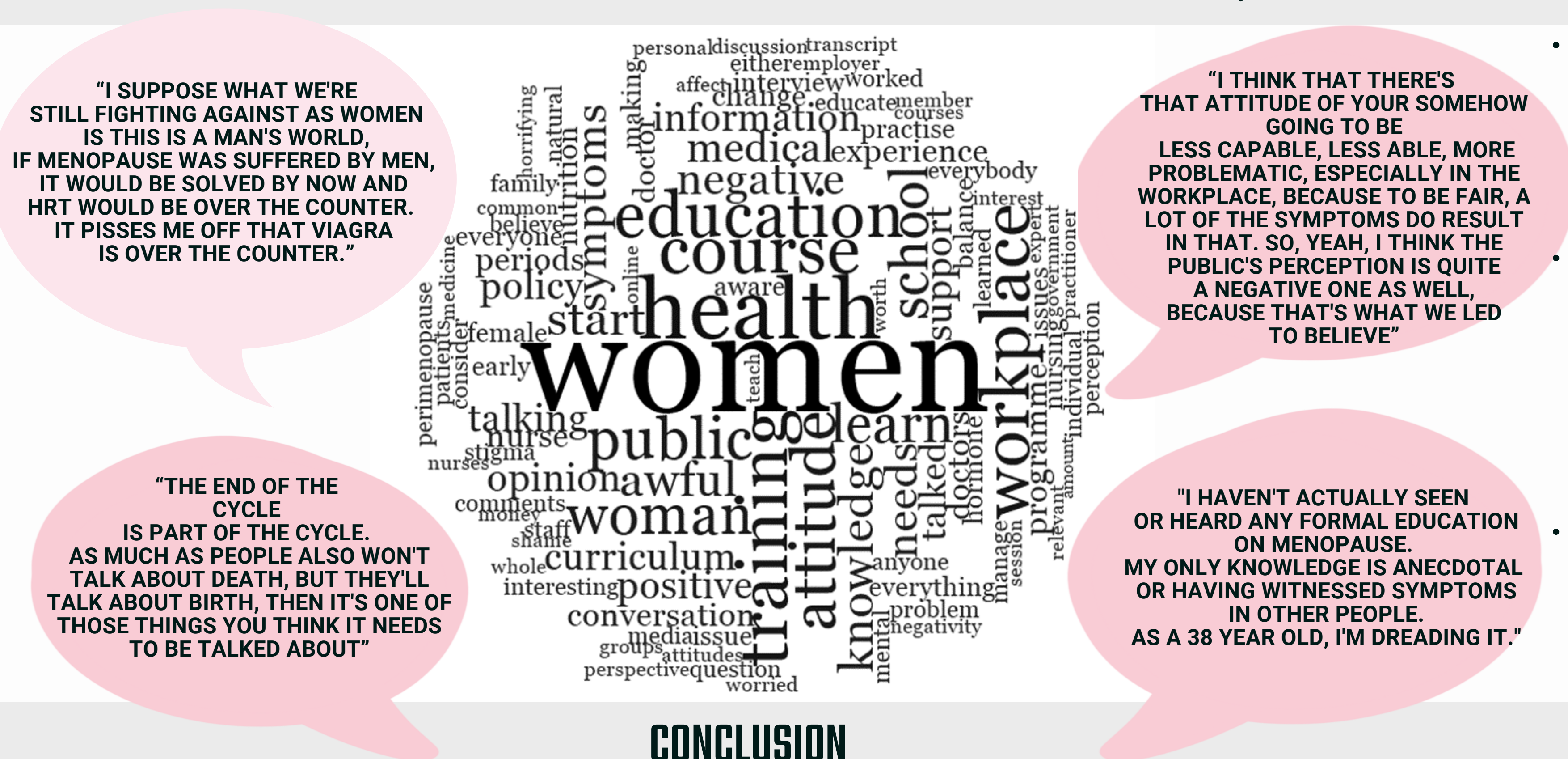
Menopause is arguably an overlooked event in the course of a woman's life, Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for 12 consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). Predominately research has shown that menopause has a history of being portrayed negatively and as a time when women are expected to become ill, depressed, unattractive, and less sexually desirable (Lock & Kaufert, 2001; Perich et al., 2017) and highlighted that the social construct of Menopause had become stereotypically a negative experience for all affected (Rubinstein & Foster, 2013).

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

Focusing on the population on the Isle of Man;
What are people’s attitudes towards menopause?
What level of knowledge do people have of menopause?
Where did the knowledge people do have, originate from?
Does knowledge relate to the attitudes?
The methods include a literature review, an online survey using a standardised Attitudes Towards Menopause scale (ATMS), and four interviews with key people.
The analysis included the use of SPSS and Nvivo thematic analysis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- A total of three hundred eighty-four participants attempted the questionnaire, with 12 only part completing it and then withdrawing. These responses were removed within the cleaning process of the data in order to remove inaccuracies and outliers within the results. Of the valid 372, 57 of which were male (15.32%) and 314 were female (84.41%) and 1 “other” (0.27%). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 65+
- Despite the fact that the majority of participants scored moderately (average score of 68%) on the knowledge section, the open-ended replies at the end of the survey suggested that many participants believed menopausal women needed additional information about menopause.
- According to the findings, 55.64% of the participants had a good attitude toward menopause
- Overall, attitude mean score in this sample represents mild to moderate positive attitudes toward menopause
- Participants generally responded enthusiastically to the open-ended feedback question with length and richness of remarks differing substantially.



- Another key indicator of attitudes to health and specifically menopause is educational level, which is thought to liberate women by giving them better access to information on health and other matters that are vital to their well-being. About half of the study participants (48.12%) had formal education, whereas one-third of the participants (25.54%) had at least secondary education.
- Friends and relatives were the most prevalent sources of knowledge regarding menopause (family members). Information from family members, friends, and group meetings may be based on little more than guesses passed down from generation to generation. This could lead to the creation of negative attitudes and the adoption of actions that are damaging to women's health. As a result, it is critical to discourage such sources of information by providing evidence-based information that promotes health and illness prevention.
- The results are not as expected regarding the correlation between knowledge and attitudes. When the Pearson Correlation test was applied the result was that of a negative correlation, as was the trendline on the scatter chart produced. If the results are allowed to guide the formation of an opinion to this, then one would say that moderate knowledge produces a positive attitude

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to examine knowledge and the impact of attitude towards menopause in the Isle of Man. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the knowledge of the respondents was on average a moderate level. However, the results indicated that more than half of the respondents had positive attitude towards menopause according to the Attitudes to Menopause Scale. Comparably the open-ended feedback responses contradicted these findings as the majority expressed a negative attitude and a wish to have better education and support for menopause. It can be concluded that the majority of participants acquired their menopause knowledge from informal sources such as friends and family, and through their own search for information for example, online.

It is important to note that since this study began the conversation on menopause has increased with regular discussions in the media both at a local and national level, which may have had a small influence on some on the participants answering the survey. Most recently it is positive to see that on Tuesday 29th March 2022 the Honourable Member of the House of Keys for Garff Mrs Daphne Caine addressed Tynwald to raise the question; What support is available for public sector staff experiencing menopause symptoms; and whether the Government plans to implement a menopause policy (Economic Affairs & Cabinet Office, 2021). The conversation around menopause has started in the Isle of Man Government, and it is hoped that discussion on menopause will continue and broaden in the Islands community and schools. Although this study does contain a wealth of insights, the results are inconclusive in the answering of the question of whether knowledge has an impact on attitudes. However, because this study reflects a small fraction of the wider population, further research to build on this evidence base is required.