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Emergence of Metabolic Syndrome among Pre and Postmenopausal Women in India

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Menopause is the strongest biological transitory phase in a women's life. Natural menopause is associated with CVD risk, which may be related to hormonal and metabolic changes. The prevalence of the metabolic syndrome increases with menopause and may partially explain the apparent acceleration in CVD after menopause. The transition from pre- to post-menopause is associated with the emergence of many features of the metabolic syndrome, including viz., increased central (intra-abdominal) body fat, a shift toward a more atherogenic lipid profile, with increased low density lipoprotein and triglycerides levels, reduced high density lipoprotein, and small, dense low density lipoprotein particles and increased glucose and insulin levels. It is unclear whether the transition to menopause increases CVD risk in all women or only those who develop features of the metabolic syndrome. The study reports the prevalence of Metabolic Syndrome in an apparently healthy population of employed pre and post menopausal women in Mysore city, India. 150 subjects without previous history of diabetes, dyslipidemia, hypertension or cardiac event, with a family history of one or more CVD risk factor were randomly drawn from a sample of 443 subjects belonging to an age group of 30 – 60years and grouped according to their menopausal status. They were evaluated for the presence of metabolic syndrome using NCEP criteria. It was observed that irrespective of menopausal status a higher percentage of women exhibited features of metabolic syndrome, 50% had FBS \geq 110mg/dl and HDL $<$ 50mg/dl while; $>$ 50% had waist circumference \geq 85cm. The observations indicate the prevalence of metabolic syndrome in apparently healthy women employees irrespective of their menopausal status. It is recommended that women aged 35 years and above, especially with a family history of CVD risk factors or cardiac event need to undergo cardiac evaluation annually or as required. Awareness programs for lifestyle changes should be organized by the institutions in association with health care sectors. A better understanding of these metabolic changes with menopause will aid in the recognition and treatment of women at risk for future CVD, leading to appropriate interventions.