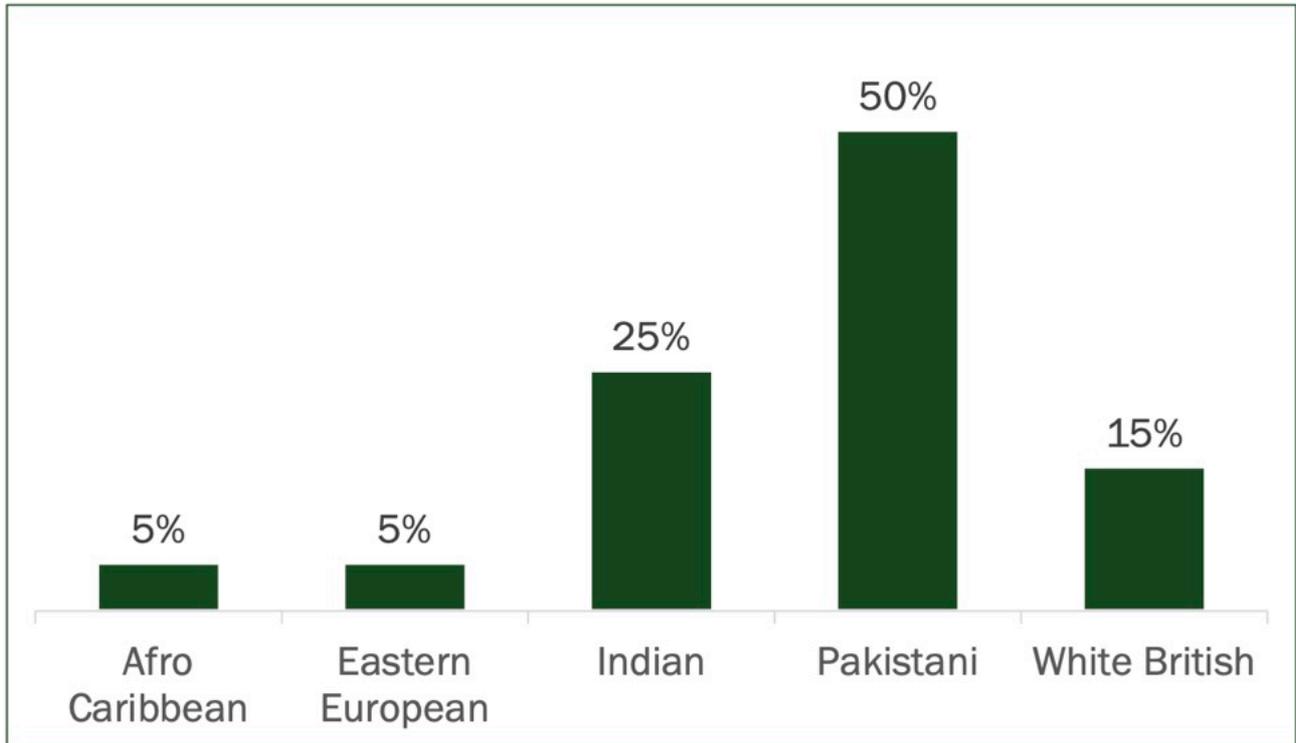


EMBRACING THE CHANGE- MENOPAUSE & WOMEN'S WELLNESS

JULY 2025



Ethnicity of Participants



Menopause Awareness and Education Report

Contributors

Dr. Sabin Kamal – General Practitioner with over 20 years of experience across general practice, urgent care, prison medicine, and specialist clinics. She is passionate about women’s health, health education, and empowering communities to improve well-being.

Dr. Mariam Aziz – Qualified from Birmingham University 18 years ago, Dr. Mariam has worked as a GP partner, GP trainer, and in leadership roles in mental health, respiratory care, and health inequalities. She has additional qualifications in paediatrics, gynaecology, and sexual health, and has also practiced in Canada as a Family Physician.

Introduction

Menopause is a natural biological stage marking the end of a woman's reproductive years. Despite being universal, it is often misunderstood or overlooked. This session aimed to provide education, share experiences, and offer practical guidance for navigating the physical and emotional changes that accompany menopause with 60 women in attendance.



Dr. Sabin emphasized that menopause is not a sign of weakness, but a meaningful life stage. Women's experiences vary widely; some may notice significant symptoms, while others experience few changes. Understanding and sharing these experiences helps normalize menopause and supports emotional well-being.

Understanding Menopause

Menopause occurs when the ovaries stop producing eggs, leading to the cessation of menstruation for 12 consecutive months. This typically happens between ages 45 and 55, though it may occur earlier due to surgery, chemotherapy, or medical conditions.

Stages of Menopause

- **Perimenopause:** Transitional phase with fluctuating hormones and irregular periods.
- **Menopause:** Confirmed after 12 months without menstruation.
- **Post menopause:** Phase after menopause with ongoing hormonal changes.

Islam teaches that every stage of life has its own beauty. Menopause is not the end of womanhood but a natural progression of life.

Symptoms of Menopause

Declining oestrogen and progesterone affect multiple body systems. Common symptoms include:

- Hot flushes and night sweats
- Brain fog and memory issues
- Fatigue and broken sleep
- Mood swings, anxiety, and low mood
- Vaginal dryness and reduced libido
- Hair thinning, weight changes, and skin changes
- Inflammation and joint pain

These symptoms can affect daily life, relationships, and mental health. Long-term consequences may include osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, and potential cognitive changes.

Managing Symptoms and Supporting Health

Menopause is not an illness, but symptoms can be managed through lifestyle choices, medical support, and emotional care.

Lifestyle Recommendations:

- **Exercise:** Walking, stretching, and strength training support bone density and reduce hot flashes.
- **Diet:** Ensure sufficient calcium (dairy, almonds), vitamin D, and omega-3 intake.
- **Sleep:** Maintain a regular schedule, cool and dark rooms, reduce screen time before bed.
- **Stress Management:** Meditation, relaxation techniques, and mindfulness.
- **Avoid Smoking:** Smoking worsens menopause symptoms.

Medical Interventions:

- **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT):** Replaces lost oestrogen and alleviates symptoms; safe for most women under GP supervision. Options include systemic or topical treatments.
- **Non-Hormonal Medications and CBT:** Can support sleep, anxiety, and mood.

Alternative Remedies:

- Evening primrose oil, black cohosh, and flaxseed may help some women. Evidence varies; consult a GP before use.

Cultural and Religious Considerations

Islam encourages self-care and honouring each stage of life. Treating menopause symptoms is permissible, and women may consult religious scholars regarding specific medications or supplements.



Key Reflections and Takeaways

Menopause is a transformative stage offering freedom from menstruation and new life opportunities. Participants were encouraged to reflect on aspects of themselves they value, such as:

- Freedom from periods

- Health and fitness
- Ability to maintain religious practices without interruption

With awareness, self-care, and appropriate medical support, women can navigate menopause with confidence, clarity, and well-being.



Questions & Answers

Can you take HRT or other medications in Islam?

- It is generally permissible to treat menopause symptoms, provided the intention is symptom management. Some women consult religious scholars regarding specific ingredients (e.g., gelatine).

Are there any supplements recommended?

- Evidence is limited, but some women benefit from flaxseed, black cohosh, and evening primrose oil. Always consult a GP before starting.

Is soya milk better than cow's milk during menopause?

- There is no strong evidence; it depends on personal preference.

How can the body produce its own oestrogen?

- Exercise, a balanced diet (higher protein and vegetables, lower carbs), and healthy lifestyle choices support natural oestrogen production.

Vitamins for perimenopause from stores like Holland & Barrett—are they recommended?

- Supplementation should be based on individual blood levels, not marketing claims. Only replace what is deficient.

Is Shilajit beneficial for menopause?

- If pure, it may help. Results vary per individual and always consult a GP regarding interactions with other medications.

Do doctors recommend alternative medication?

- Only if scientifically proven; otherwise, it's a personal choice. Always discuss with a GP before use.

How long can menopause symptoms last?

- Duration varies per individual; symptoms can last several years.



Feedback

1. Session Feedback:

- The session was overwhelmingly seen as informative, helpful, and knowledgeable.
- Participants appreciated learning new information, especially in a relaxed, social atmosphere.
- Some noted that the topic could benefit from being split into subtopics for deeper discussion.

- Many highlighted the value of discussing menopause, a topic not commonly addressed.

2. Speaker Feedback:

- Speakers were consistently described as clear, articulate, knowledgeable, and able to answer questions effectively.
- Participants expressed gratitude for having experts present.

3. Suggested Future Topics:

- Health-related: Exercise, joint pains, women's health, diet and nutrition, mental health, post-menopause issues.
- Family & social topics: Dealing with teenagers, infidelity, sexual dysfunction, navigating marriage for older women, raising a child with a disability.
- Financial: Halal investments, Islamic finances.
- Other: Autism awareness.

**Report created by the Tea & Chat participants
supported by the MWC Team**

