Research Article

Quality of Life of Perimenopausal Women Seeking Health Care for Low Back Pain in Meghalaya - A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Background: Low back pain (LBP) is an important clinical, social, economic, and public health problem affecting the population. In India, the prevalence of LBP has been found to range from 6.2% to 92% with an increase of prevalence with age and female preponderance. The objective is to understand the quality of life of perimenopausal women seeking health care for LBP. **Methods:** A qualitative research was conducted in a rural setting of West Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya from January to June 2018 and included perimenopausal women aged 40–50 years who had sought health care for LBP. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected from 29 participants using an interview guide. Simultaneously, data collection and the analyzing of data were carried out. After interviewing the participants, the transcripts were prepared and translation was done. The data were read thoroughly to develop codes and categories. The participants were described in terms of sociodemographic details using descriptive statistics. **Results:** Mean age of the participants is 45 years. 38% of the participants did not have any kind of formal education. The results showed that the majority of the participants were daily wage earners and preferred seeking health care from the government facilities. Financial problems and lack of education played an important role in prioritizing work over their health. **Conclusion:** The study showed that perimenopausal women considered work a priority over their health and financial problems play an important role in influencing the kind of work that they do. Educating and creating awareness among the community members are important to reduce the burden of LBP and on ways to prevent and manage it.

Key words: Low back pain, perimenopausal women, quality of life

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Introduction

Low back pain (LBP) is an important clinical, social, economic, and public health problem affecting the population indiscriminately^[1] and is a frequently occurring phenomenon.^[2] LBP is known to have an enormous impact on individuals, families, communities, governments, and

businesses throughout the world.^[3] Out of 291 conditions studied in Global Burden of Disease 2010, LBP was ranked to be the highest in terms of disability and sixth in terms of overall burden and the global point prevalence of LBP was 9.4%.^[4] In India, the prevalence of LBP has been found to range from 6.2% to 92% with an increase of prevalence with age and female preponderance.^[1] LBP largely affects those aged between 45 and 60 and women going through a perimenopausal period are likely to show many symptoms such as LBP.^[5] More than 80% of the women experience physical or psychological symptoms in the years when they approach menopause, with various distress and disturbances in their lives, leading to a decrease in the quality of life.^[2,6]

Since there is little information about LBP in general or in the working population in developing and low-income countries,^[1] it is also important to know about the quality of life of perimenopausal women who seek care for LBP. Majority of the studies focused on the quantitative aspect,

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