

**KNOWLEDGE AND HELP SEEKING BEHAVIORS FOR MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS AMONG FEMALE STAFF WORKING IN A SELECTED UNIVERSITY IN OGUN STATE**

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Eunice Abimbola Ojo, Oluwatosin. O. Ope-Babadele, Mary Ayodeji Gbenga-Epebinu, Rachel Omolara Aina and Jolayemi Oluwaseyi Damilola (2022) Knowledge and Help Seeking Behaviors for Menopausal Symptoms among Female Staff Working in a Selected University in Ogun State, *International Journal of Public Health, Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, Vol. 7, No.1, pp.14-28

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**ABSTRACT:** *The menopausal years is a very important phase in a woman's life and it is of good benefit to the women who engage in help seeking behaviors so as to be able to cope well with the phase. The purpose of this study was to see the knowledge and help seeking behaviors among female staffs working in the hall of residence at a selected university in Ogun state. This cross - sectional study was conducted in Babcock University on 102 female staffs who worked in the halls of residence. Total enumeration was used and purposive sampling method was used to select participants. A self-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The research instrument was validated by experts of Nursing Science and Tests & Measurement. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test re-test and it was found to be reliable. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions while inferential statistics of chi-square and correlation were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed 35% of the women had low knowledge while 65% of them had very high knowledge of menopause. Also, it was discovered that 82% of the respondents have low help seeking behavior while only 18% had high help seeking behavior. This could be as a result of the response of the respondents where 71% of the respondents reported that they do not believe in seeking help as Menopause is a natural aging process. Many of the respondents, about 74% had low effect of menopause on daily activities while only 26% had high effects on daily activity. Mostly the women whose menopause symptoms do affect their daily activities do so*

*with their families and homes. The study also showed that there is no significant association between knowledge and help seeking behavior ( $r = -0.093, p > 0.05$ ) and there is no significant association between knowledge and the effects of menopause on daily activities ( $\chi^2 (2.196), p > 0.05$ ). ( $r = 0.148, p > 0.05$ ). It was recommended among others that health organizations and health workers need to improve their awareness efforts to include mainstream media and social media to help women have a better understanding of menopause symptoms.*

**KEYWORDS:** knowledge, help-seeking behaviors, menopausal symptoms, female staff

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## INTRODUCTION

Menopause is an important phase in a woman's life (Abdullah, et al., 2017). Women experience a lot of symptoms during the period of menopause. For some women, these symptoms are mild, and the transitioning phase is an easy one for them while for others, the symptoms are so severe and seems to be affecting their life in general (Singh, et al., 2018). Although it is a universal phenomenon among women, the timing of the onset and length of the menopausal transition and the timing of the last menstruation are not similar (Simarjeet, et al., 2018).

World Health Organization (2013), defined natural menopause as the "permanent cessation of menstruation resulting from the loss of ovarian follicular activity". The ups and downs of estrogen and, to a lesser extent, progesterone, probably produce most of the symptom's women experience during this transition, some of these symptoms are irregular or absent periods, hot flushes/flushes, palpitations, decreased vaginal lubrication, mood swings, insomnia, anxiety and depression. Most women reach menopause without having adequate knowledge of menopause and how it affects their physical and mental health. They lack knowledge about the occurrence of this period and so they do not know the ways to deal with the symptoms, these women have poor knowledge on how to seek for care from health care providers. So in spite of the availability of health facilities in their society, the utilization of services is not to the maximum (Ara, et al., 2018).

Women's' reaction to this life transition can be influenced by different factors such as age, parity, hormonal changes, socio-economic factors, educational status as well as cultural and geographical factors (Fouzia, et al., 2014). Women with more knowledge of menopause are most likely to manage menopause better than women with little knowledge (Eun, et al., 2014). During menopause, just a few numbers of women seek for medical help while the others assume that the symptoms would go with time so they do not bother looking for help. Women with insufficient knowledge about menopause needs to be encouraged to engage in activities that involves health management for better knowledge and care (Ara, et al., 2018). The level of education positively influenced the knowledge about menopausal symptoms as the more literate the respondents were, the better their knowledge. Women need health teaching to learn the normal parameters of menopause, so they can continue to monitor their own health during this time.

In a society where women have inadequate knowledge about menopause, its symptoms, complications and treatments, they are unable to tolerate the symptoms well and so it affects

the lives in general. It is a prevalent and common problem among women which may have a negative impact on women if not well addressed. It may cause these women to deal with these symptoms everyday instead of getting treatment and going about their activities of daily living without stress. It would be helpful if women are able to learn what to expect and what options are available to assist the transition. In order to improve the quality of life of women, more resources should be channelled into educating women on the change that comes with menopause and encouraging them to seek for help (Ara, et al., 2018).

With all these being noted, the researchers inquisitively decided to gather more information on the topic and have an evidence-based data on knowledge and help seeking behaviors among Babcock University female staffs, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun state. The study specifically:

1. determined the level of knowledge of menopausal symptoms among Babcock University female staffs;
2. determined the help seeking behaviors for menopausal symptoms among Babcock University female staffs;
3. examined the various treatment therapies utilized by the female staffs in Babcock University

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised for the study;

1. What is the level of knowledge of the respondents about menopause?
2. How and where do women seek help during menopause?
3. What is the effect of menopause on daily activities?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were generated for the study;

1. There is no significant association between level of preparedness for menopause and knowledge about menopause.
2. There is no significant association between the level of preparedness for menopause and the age of respondents.
3. There is no significant association between knowledge of menopause and the help seeking behaviors.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research method for data collection to assess the knowledge and help seeking behaviours of menopausal symptoms among female staff working in the hall of residence at Babcock University, Ilishan Remo. It used a purposive sampling technique via total enumeration to select 102 eligible females. Questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into 6 sections. Section A has 4 items and elicited information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the staff which includes their age, marital status, gender and level of education. Section B consisted four items that elicited information on their sexual history. Section C has 12 items which elicited information on their menopausal symptoms. Section D has 4 items which elicited information on their knowledge on menopausal symptoms. Section E has 5 items which elicited information on their help

seeking behaviours. Section F has 5 items which elicited information on how the menopausal symptoms affect their daily lives.

The face and content validity of the instrument was validated by experts of Nursing Science and Tests & Measurement. The questionnaire was structured in a way that enabled respondents to select from the options provided. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test re-test method and it was found reliable. Data for this study were collected and analysed using statistical package for social science Version 23. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution table, percentages, mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions. Chi-square and correlation analysis were used to test all the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Research question 1:** What is the level of knowledge of the respondents about menopause?

**Table 1: Level of knowledge of respondents on menopause**

Statement	Frequency	%
<b>Do you know about menopause?</b>		
Yes	100	100.0
No	0	-
<b>How did you get to know about menopause?</b>		
Books/Magazine	24	24
TV/Internet	32	32
Family/Friends	21	21
Health care provider	23	23
<b>Do you know what causes the symptoms in menopause?</b>		
Yes	45	45
No	55	55
<b>What is your own description of menopause?</b>		
A normal aging process	91	91
An abnormal aging process	8	8
A disease	1	1
A spiritual Attack	-	0

Source: Researchers' survey and computation, 2021

All (100%) of the respondents agreed to knowing about menopause, 32% of them got their source from the television/internet while 24% from magazines and books, closely following, 23% got their information from health workers while 21% from friends and family. Less than half (45%) of respondents know what causes menopause while over half (55%) have no idea. However, 91% of the respondents agreed that menopause is a normal aging process while 8%

said it is abnormal and 1% reported that it is a disease. 35% of the total respondents had low knowledge while 65% had high knowledge.

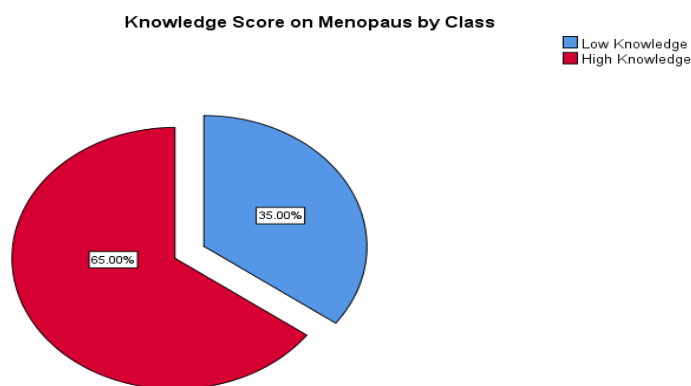


Figure 1:

Knowledge score on menopause by class

**Research question 2:** How and where do women seek help during menopause?

**Table 2: Help seeking behaviour on menopause**

Help seeking behaviors	Frequency (N=100)	Percentage (%)
<b>Do you think it is important to get treatment for menopausal symptoms??</b>		
Yes	29	29
No	71	71
<b>Have you ever sought for help for menopausal symptoms?</b>		
Yes	21	21
No	79	79
<b>If no, why? (79)</b>		
I don't feel it is important	22	27.84
I feel the treatment might be expensive	37	46.84
I don't have access to any help	20	25.32
<b>If yes, Where did you get the information from? (21)</b>		
a family member/friend	3	14.29
Hospital	5	23.81
Church	9	42.86
Traditional Home	1	4.76
		18

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Chemist	3	14.29
<b>What type of treatment did you receive? (21)</b>		
Drugs	14	66.67
Balm	2	9.52
Prayers	4	19.05
Massage	1	4.76
Waist Beads	0	-
Incision	0	-
<b>Do you use home remedies? (20)</b>		
Yes	15	75
No	5	5
<b>If yes, what type? (15)</b>		
Balm	6	40
Warm water bottle		
Herbs	9	60

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Source: Researchers' survey and computation, 2021

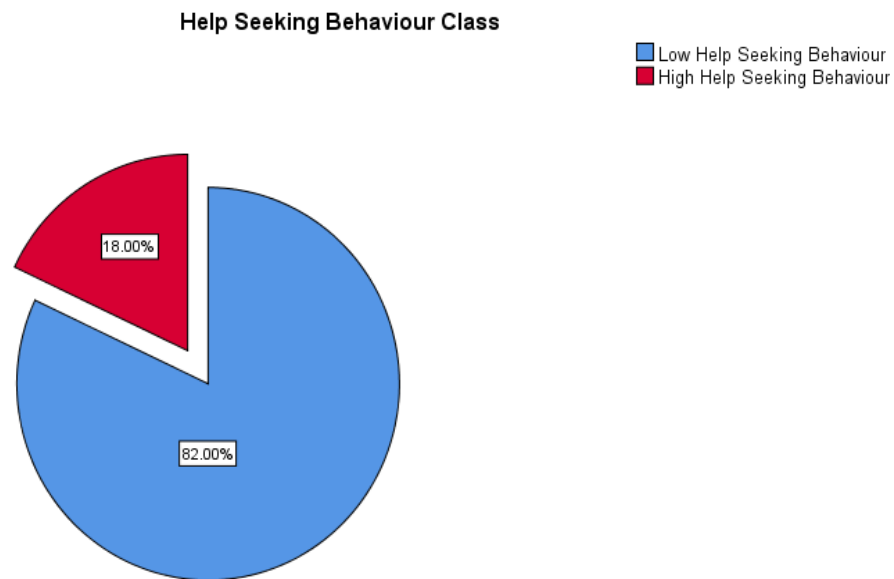
On the extent at which respondents seek for help on menopause effects and symptoms, 71% of the respondents reported negative that they do not think it is important to get treatment for menopausal symptoms while only 21% have ever sought for help. Among the 79 respondents that did not find it necessary to go for treatment, 27.84% said they do not feel it is important, 46.84% said they feel the treatment might be expensive while 25.32% do not have access to any help. Among the respondents who responded positively to getting treatment to menopausal symptoms, 42.86% got information from the church, 23% got information from the Hospital, 14% got information each from family/friends or chemist while only 4.8% got informed in a traditional home. About 66% of the respondents who got treatment got it as drugs while about 19% received prayers as a curative measure. About 75% of those who got treatment use home remedies and 60% of which got it as herbs while 40% got herbs.

The data gotten from respondents was further investigated by classifying it into strong and weak help seeking behavior of respondents towards menopause. The responses were summed and classified into weak (those who scored less than 6) and strong (those who scored above 5), 11 was the total mark. Majority of the respondents (82%) had weak help seeking behavior while only 18% of respondents had strong help seeking behavior.

**Table 3: Classification of the Help seeking behavior of respondents**

				Frequency	Percent
Valid	Weak Help Seeking Behavior	Help Seeking	82	82.0	
	Strong Help Seeking Behavior	Help Seeking	18	18.0	

Source: Researchers’ survey and computation, 2019



**Research question 3:** What is the effect of menopause on daily activities?

**Table 4: Effect of Menopause on Daily Activities**

S/N		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1.	Do menopausal symptoms affect your work efficiency?	49	38	12	1
2.	Does menopausal symptom affect your relationship with co-workers?	61	32	6	1
3.	Does menopausal symptom affect your relationship with your family?	44	31	21	4
4.	Does menopausal symptom affect your social life activities?	44	32	22	2
5.	Does menopausal symptom affect your home responsibilities?	45	29	18	8

Source: Researchers’ survey and computation, 2021

The effect of menopause on the daily activities of respondents revealed the following; 26% agreed to its impact on home responsibilities. In support of this, (25%) reported that the symptoms affect their relationship with their families- sometimes (21%), often (4%). Closely following at 24% is the report that the symptoms affect their social life, while the least effects were observed on work efficiency (13%) and relationship with co-workers (7%).

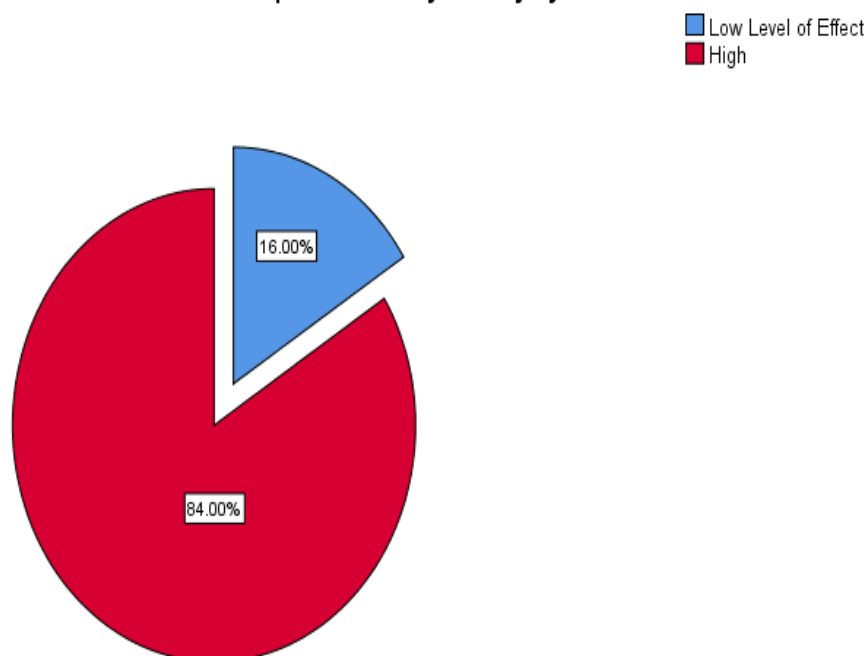
Furthermore, the scores in the table above were aggregated and classified into high and low effects. The minimum score was 5 while maximum was 20 therefore; the midpoint was arrived at as 12. The respondents who scored less and equal to 12 had low effect while the respondents who scored above 12 had high impact, i.e. their menopause had serious effects on their daily living. 74% of respondents do not allow their menopause syndrome to interfere with their normal life while 26% of the respondents do.

**Table 5: Class of effect of Menopause on Daily Activities**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Low Effect of Menopause	74	74.0
High Effect of Menopause	26	26.0

Source: Researchers' survey and computation, 2019

**Effect of Menopause on Daily Activity by Class**





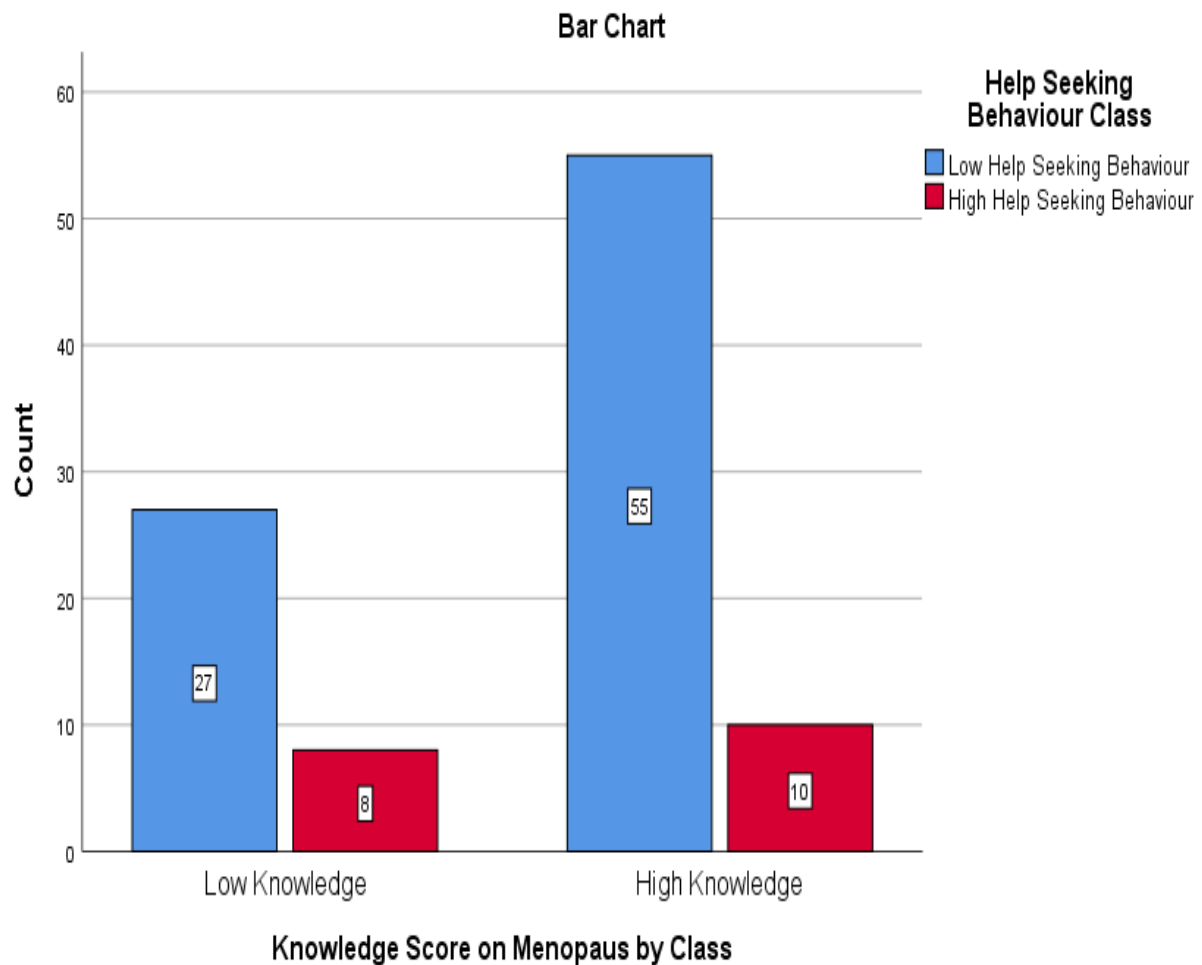
**Test of Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between help seeking behaviours and knowledge about menopause.

**Table 6: Crosstab, Chi-Square and Correlation**

		Help Seeking Behavior Class			Chi-Square (p-value)	Correlation(p- value)	
		Low Help Seeking Behavior	High Help Seeking Behavior	Total			
Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	Low Knowledge	Count	27	8	0.861 (0.354)	0.093 (0.359)	
		% within Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	77.1%	22.9%			100.0%
		% within Help Seeking Behavior Class	32.9%	44.4%			35.0%
	High Knowledge	Count	55	10			65
		% within Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	84.6%	15.4%			100.0%
		% within Help Seeking Behaviour Class	67.1%	55.6%			65.0%
Total	Count	82	18	100			
	% within Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	82.0%	18.0%	100.0%			
	% within Help Seeking Behaviour Class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			

Source: Researchers' survey and computation, 2021



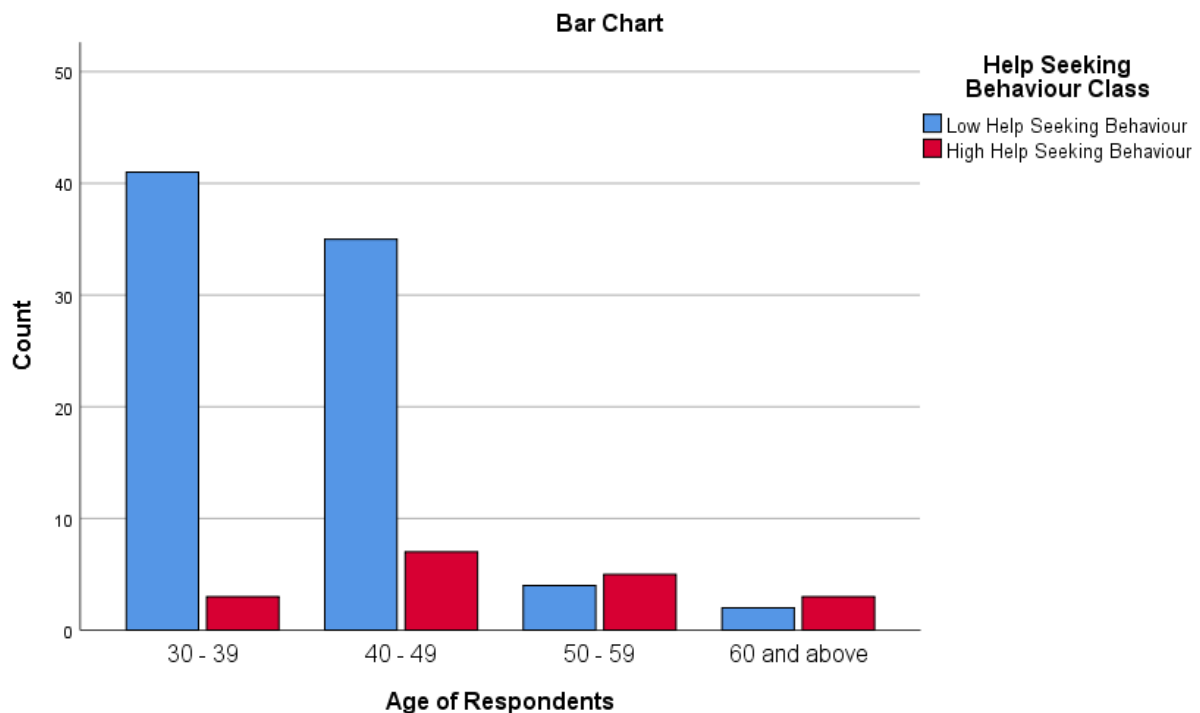
The chi-square statistical test of association and spearman correlation's test of relationship was used to investigate this hypothesis. The result in table 6 above shows that there is no significant association between the knowledge of respondents and their help seeking behavior. The correlation value -0.093, (also not significant as  $p > 0.05$ ), implied a negative and very weak association between knowledge and help seeking behavior. This implies that the knowledge a respondent has does not necessarily cause her to seek for help. The null hypothesis is hence accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant association between the Help Seeking behaviors and the age of respondents

**Table 7: Crosstab, Chi-Square and Correlation of help seeking behaviour and age**

		Help Seeking Behavior Class		Total	Chi Square (value)	(p-orrelation(p-value))
		Low Help Seeking Behavior	High Help Seeking Behavior			
Age of Respondents and above	30 - Count	41	3	44	18.354 (0.000)	0.360 (0.000)
	39 % within Age of Respondents	93.2%	6.8%	100.0%		
	% within Help Seeking Behavior	50.0%	16.7%	44.0%		
	40 - Count	35	7	42		
	49 % within Age of Respondents	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%		
	% within Help Seeking Behavior	42.7%	38.9%	42.0%		
	50 - Count	4	5	9		
	59 % within Age of Respondents	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%		
	% within Help Seeking Behavior	4.9%	27.8%	9.0%		
	60 Count	2	3	5		
	% within Age of Respondents	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%		
	% within Help Seeking Behavior	2.4%	16.7%	5.0%		
	Total Count	82	18	100		
	% within Age of Respondents	82.0%	18.0%	100.0%		
	% within Help Seeking Behavior Class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Source: Researcher's survey and computation, 2021



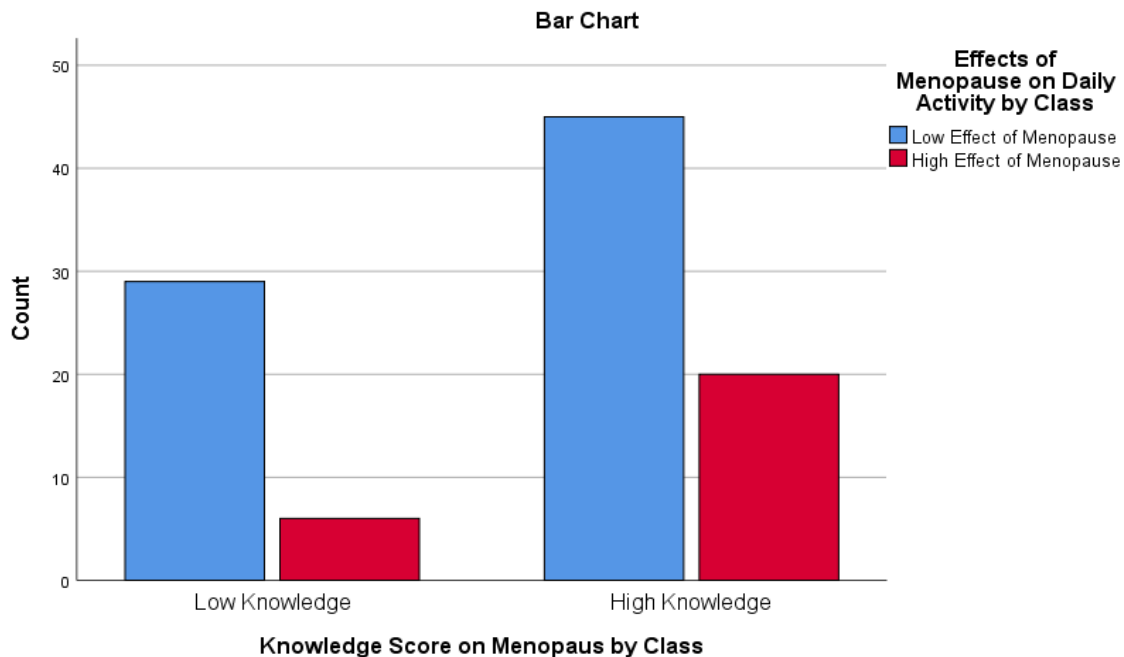
The chi-square statistical test of association and spearman correlation's test of relationship was used to investigate this hypothesis. There was a statistically significant association between both Help seeking behavior and Age of respondents. Also the correlation value of 0.36 implies that there is a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) positive relationship of 36% between both variables. This can be interpreted as, as the ages of the women increases, their help seeking behavior also increase. The null hypothesis is hence rejected.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant association between knowledge and the impacts of menopause on daily activities

**Table 8: Crosstab, Chi-Square and Correlation of knowledge and the impacts of menopause on daily activities**

		Effects of Menopause on Daily Activity by Class			Chi-Square (p-value)	Correlation (p-value)	
		Low Effect of Menopause	High Effect of Menopause	Total			
Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	Low Knowledge	Count	29	6	35	2.196 (0.138)	0.148 (0.141)
		% within Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%		
		% within Effects of Menopause on Daily Activity by Class	39.2%	23.1%	35.0%		
	High Knowledge	Count	45	20	65		
		% within Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	69.2%	30.8%	100.0%		
		% within Effects of Menopause on Daily Activity by Class	60.8%	76.9%	65.0%		
	Total	Count	74	26	100		
		% within Knowledge Score on Menopause by Class	74.0%	26.0%	100.0%		
		% within Effects of Menopause on Daily Activity by Class	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Source: Researcher's survey and computation, 2021



The chi-square statistical test of association and spearman correlation's test of relationship was used to investigate this hypothesis. There was no significant association between the knowledge and the effects of menopause on daily activities (Chi(2.196),  $p > 0.05$ ). The correlation estimate also showed a weak and positive correlation however the relationship was not statistically significant (corr value=0.148,  $p > 0.05$ ). The null hypothesis is hence accepted.

## DISCUSSION

From the study, it was that there is no significant association between knowledge and help seeking behavior. The hypothesis was accepted after the statistical test of association was carried out. The findings of this present study were in line with the study carried out in Ibadan Nigeria by Ibraheem, Oyewole, and Olaseha (2015); Adekunle, Fawole, and Okunlola (2000) who also found a significant association between knowledge of women and their help seeking behaviors. Despite that their study was carried out among women already in their menopausal stages and that almost all of them had a good knowledge of menopause, the women were seen not to seek for help as they believed it is a normal aging symptom in their life. Furthermore, in their study, it was revealed that menopausal women in the study group did not know about the risks associated with menopause. They regarded sex as the cause of most illnesses that occur in women after menopause thus sex is highly discouraged among menopausal women. They looked forward to getting older and becoming like men. Many participants did nothing about the symptoms they experienced while those who made any attempt tried remedies like self-medication, body massage, praying, stopped having sex. Only a very small fraction visited the hospital.

The study revealed that there was significant association between the help seeking behaviors and the age of respondents. This finding is in support of the research work of (Agwu, et al.,

2008) carried out in a rural area of southeast Nigeria. They found age to be associated with help seeking behavior, this can be explained as the study examined women from the ages of 35 and above therefore, as women advanced in age, they found out that their help seeking behavior increases. This can be accounted for as the more a woman advances in age the higher chance of seeing the symptoms of menopause.

It was revealed that there was no significant association between knowledge and the effects of menopause on daily activities. The finding of this study is in negation to the findings of Rumi, Alam and Yusuf (2018) who found out from their study that there is significant association between knowledge of women and how their menopausal symptoms affect their daily activities. The study found low back pain to be the most dominant among Bangladesh women followed by loss of libido. However, the high knowledge of the women was seen to influence the extent of effect menopausal symptoms has on their daily activities.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study conclusions can be drawn that as women grow older, they develop more awareness on the issue on menopause. In addition, it is concluded that there was no association between the knowledge of a woman on menopause and how menopause affects her daily living. The overall conclusion is that the knowledge of women does not affect nor influence how they seek for help as most of them believe it is only a normal aging process.

## Recommendations

1. Health organizations and health workers need to improve their awareness efforts to include mainstream media and social media to help women have a better understanding of menopause symptoms and that they can come for help.
2. Home remedies are to be highly discouraged as it has neither prescription nor dosage and they cannot be sure of its effectiveness.
3. Religious centers and other centers such as traditional homes should be enlightened and made to understand that drugs, not prayers, should be used as treatments for menopause symptoms and other sicknesses. Prayers can be used along with drugs.
4. Health centers should do regular campaigns in their neighborhoods to let women realize that treatment is available for menopause symptoms.

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