



Menopause survey – Autumn 2022

The highlights

Thank you once again to all the amazing women who completed our survey. We ran our research questionnaire throughout October to coincide with Menopause Awareness Month. The depth of detail provided by those who took part was exactly what we wanted and needed to fully understand the range of symptoms, how people are dealing with them and how peoples understanding of the menopause has changed in the past 12 months.

The honesty and in some cases the emotions expressed in the responses were truly amazing – thank you.

Question 1. How are you feeling today?

43% of those who responded said they were feeling tired

39% said they were feeling ok

14% said they were feeling anxious

11% said they were feeling good.



Should we really be feeling constantly tired? What can we do to boost this? Is this a reflection the sleep issues many are dealing with, does anxiety make you feel more tired? This ties in the same as our survey last year, being constantly tired can be debilitating in itself.

Question 2. What is your age?

Age range

14% of those who responded were aged between 35-44

79% of those who responded were aged between 45-54

7% of those who responded were aged between 55-64

It was good to see that 14% of those who responded were in the 35-44 age bracket. We can assume that they are starting their menopause research / journey. When do the symptoms really start? From a personal perspective I believe I started feeling emotional symptoms when I was 45 which could easily have been the start of my perimenopause.

There have been reports in the press recently that doctors' appointments should be offered to women at the age of 45 to discuss the menopause. I would suggest adding this to the 40-year health check would help women to understand more about what was on the horizon and the symptoms to look out for.

Question 3 Which of the following applies to you?



Believed they were menopausal	37%
Felt that they were peri-menopausal	57%
Wanted to find out more about the peri / menopause	6%

Understanding the difference between Perimenopause and Menopause can be difficult to navigate when some of the symptoms are not physical. The definition of Perimenopause is:

Perimenopause means "around menopause" and refers to the time during which your body makes the natural transition to menopause, marking the end of the reproductive years. Perimenopause is also called the menopausal transition. (Mayo Clinic)

If the average woman's periods actually stop at 51, why do we feel our bodies are changing from as early as 40? Looking at the symptoms below may help as you navigate this time in your life.

[Menopause symptoms](#)

Question 4. Since October 2021, do you feel your knowledge on menopause has stayed the same, improved or are you feeling overwhelmed?



87% felt that their knowledge had improved

10% felt their knowledge had stayed the same

3% felt overwhelmed with the knowledge

We wanted to find out if the increase in the profile of menopause in the past 12 months has helped people to understand more about the effects of menopause. It would seem that this increased publicity has helped significantly. As they say, knowledge is power and understanding what is happening to your body is vital to help you make informed decisions.

5. Does your organisation you work for have a menopause policy?



Yes 20%

No 27%

Not sure 30%

23% either worked for themselves or didn't work

While we need to understand the challenges of menopause, so do the people around us. We wanted to find out how people felt their employers were in terms of menopause policy.

We were pleased to see that many organisations did have a menopause policy. For more information on how to create a policy and what it should contain please click below. How to approach your boss about implementing such a policy can be a sticking point, the links below may help too.

<https://www.acas.org.uk/menopause-at-work>

<https://menopauseintheworkplace.co.uk/>

It feels like we are at the beginning of this as a process with many larger organisations taking the lead which is great news but we still have a long way to go.

6. Have you thought about leaving your job due to the symptoms of menopause?

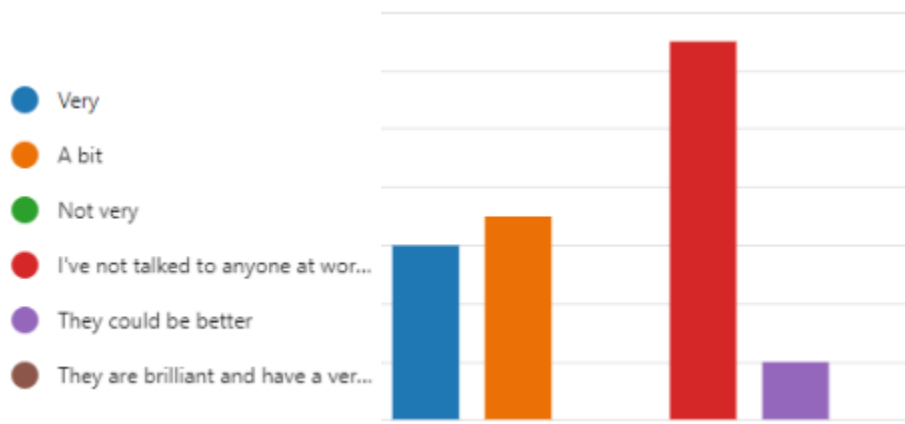
No 76%

Yes 24%

Alarming, why did nearly a ¼ of those who responded thought about leaving their jobs. Is this a reflection on the employer or society as a whole? Does this undermine the statistics above regarding Menopause policies? If you look around your office, 1 in 4 of the women of menopausal age has thought about leaving her job because of the symptoms. This is quite a sobering thought. From the lost skills to the cost of recruitment, it would be good to see more organisations supporting women as they head through the menopause. For more resources on to how to support your team, please click the link below:

<https://www.menopauseatwork.org/>

Question 7. How sympathetic / empathetic is your employer to your symptoms?



Very 21%

A bit 25%

Not talked to anyone at work 46%

They could be better 7%

They are brilliant and have a very proactive approach – no one! - what does this say?!

The highest reaction was that people hadn't talked to anyone at work. This was a surprise and we asked ourselves why not? Is it that we feel it's something we should just cope with? Women don't want to show any signs of "professional weakness" Is that how menopause is seen within the workplace? We know that women find comfort and support from primarily from friends so how can these relationships and subsequent support be transferred to the workplace?

The Wellbeing for Women campaign is working towards addressing this issue. Please click the link below to find out more about what your organisation could commit to:

[Menopause workplace pledge](#)

Question 8. How sympathetic / empathetic is your family to your symptoms?

Very 27%

A bit 45%

Not very 13%

Could be better 10%

They are brilliant and have a very proactive approach 7%

How do we talk to our families about this? Is there still an archaic humour to the topic of menopause. Over a quarter of those who responded said that their families were very sympathetic or empathetic. With another 7% saying their families had been brilliant! This is great news!

How can we have those conversations? Depending on the age of your family and your experiences this can be embarrassing, difficult or it can be light and fun. If you have teenagers, you are probably experiencing a range of hormones and challenges as they change into young adults. Approaching this conversation can be and should be done, for your own wellbeing. For suggestions on where to start, the link below is a fountain of information.

[Health and Her](#)

Question 9. What are your symptoms so far.

The range of symptoms listed was quite extensive.

60% of those who replied noted anxiety as one of their symptoms.

Did you know there are 34 symptoms? How can do you be sure that they are menopause symptoms or signs of something else? Speak to your Doctor.

What really struck us that the emotional impact of peri / menopause has such a profound impact on those who responded. Comments included:

Rage / emotional / tearful / low self-esteem / overwhelmed / annoyed

irritable / depression / mood swings / low moods / unhappiness

Lack of enjoyment / lack of motivation / not feeling myself

Mental Wellbeing is often overlooked. When we combine these feelings with children leaving home and aging parents, these aspects can be debilitating and often go unrecognised.

Physically speaking, tiredness, weight gain, hot flushes, night sweats, brain fog, heavy periods were all high on the list of symptoms with sleep issues being a key difficulty. Some symptoms that are not often mentioned included thinning hair, dry eyes, dizziness, aching limbs, palpitations and digestive issues.

While the physical impact can be very difficult to deal with, we need to look at the anxiety that the onset of these symptoms can cause.

Question 10 Which symptoms do you find hardest to deal with?

Anxiety 23%

Brain fog 23%

Sleep 23%

Could these symptoms go hand in hand? Lack of sleep – brain fog – anxiety about the other two? Just recognising these as menopause symptoms can help with your wellbeing and knowing you are not on your own makes all the difference.



Question 11. Are there symptoms which have surprised you?

29% said no – does this mean that those people are more well informed? We very much hope so. In terms of other surprising symptoms, please see below:

- Rage
- How many symptoms there were
- Weight gain
- Anxiety
- Palpitations
- Aching
- Sweats
- Lack of motivation
- Brain fog
- Sleep issues
- Digestive issues

Question 12 What advice would you give someone who is starting their menopause journey?

Wow! This was a goldmine of suggestions. The feel of the comments very much came down to researching the menopause and finding out as much as you can about the way your body can change. Finding a supportive group of people and talking to friends and family to support you is so important as your symptoms also impact those around you too.

Some other highlights were:

- Keep a diary to track your symptoms / feelings
- Take supplements
- Explore HRT
- Talk to the Doctor / get blood tests

Question 13. When it comes to prominent advocates for menopause policy and change, who springs to mind (not just Davina)?

- Dr Newsom
- Totes Meri Peri – Facebook Group
- Jenny Éclair
- Mariella Fostrup
- Louise Minchin
- Lorraine Candy
- Meg Matthews
- Oprah Winfrey
- Dr Nighat Arif
- Lisa Snowden
- Andrea McLean
- Dr Naomi Potter
- Dr Sabine
- Lorraine Kelly
- Carolyn Harris MP

Question 14 What are your thoughts on Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)?



Genius 31%

Exploring 45%

Nervous 7%

Avoiding 14%

No way 3%

We recognise that this is still a divisive subject, 45% of those who responded were exploring this as an option to help with their symptoms. In our last survey we explored the alternative therapies on offer.

It would appear from this particular question that there is a more positive lean on HRT than expected. Has this been down to the Davina effect? Has the messaging become more positive regarding HRT or is it that the generation of women who were put off HRT are now through the menopause and there is a more open-minded and less fearful approach?

Question 15. Has your opinion on HRT changed over the last 12 months

50% said yes – is this the Davina effect / raising the profile of the safety of HRT

Question 16. Are there any resources / websites or social media platforms you would like to recommend?

- Dr Menopause Care
- Menopause Dietician
- Totes Mer Peri – Facebook
- Balance App
- Latte Lounge podcast

Conclusion

Looking at the data and the responses there definitely felt like there was a more positive attitude to last years survey. Looking back at the comments, it was heartbreaking to read about how debilitating and stressful menopause was on those who responded. The same cannot be said for this survey. It felt like it was more a “we are in this together” feel and the thought that being knowledgeable can be reassuring.

Whether it is at home or at work, there is support out there. We now have a number of high profile advocates who are championing the cause – once you recognise that the menopause is to blame for how you are feeling. There is still more work to do on educating younger women on when the symptoms can start and how difficult the mental symptoms can be.

It would appear that on the whole we are feeling more educated on menopause and the wide range of symptoms there are so on a personal level we can deal with it better. It does seem that there is still a long way to go with the workplace. Many organisations are making improvements by creating menopause policies and hopefully implementing them too. It would appear there are still many companies out there where progress needs to be made. The Menopause Workplace Pledge is centralising and promoting the menopause cause by engaging with organisations and asking them to commit to the Menopause pledge. We look forward to seeing the impact of this over the next 12 months. Could you organisation sign up? How can we influence these changes? Depending on the arena you work in and the culture of your organisation and whether it is predominantly female led can make a huge difference as to the response you will get. As with any large change, it takes small steps.

So, what of “The Davina Effect” There is no doubt Davina has been a true advocate and has raised the profile of the menopause within mainstream media. By championing the menopause agenda, she has lobbied government and has used her platform to keep the conversation going outside of Menopause Awareness Month. While Davina is now alone in this campaign, she has brought the subject into regular conversation and helped women to start the conversation and recognise the difficulties.

Having looked at the history of the menopause, the term itself has been recognised since 1921. The article below will raise a smile in the first recommended therapies. The article has raised an interesting viewpoint, while in the West we see it as a negative, in India it is seen as a positive. What does this say about our cultures and what can we learn from India?

[Menopause history](#)