



Evidence Search results	
Search topic:	Articles on menopause/perimenopause in women with learning/intellectual disabilities, Down Syndrome, neurodiversity and women with mental health - how to measure, challenges and impact on dementia, mental health, wellbeing, challenging behaviour, physical health. Also, any examples of good practice
Date requested:	24 th March 2026
Date completed:	12 th May 2026
Search completed by:	Laetitia Delaleuf
Number of results selected:	36
Time taken:	15 hours

Citing this evidence search
If you reference this search in any paper, publication or presentation, please let us know and use the following format: Delaleuf, L. (2026). <i>Evidence summary: menopause/perimenopause in women with learning/intellectual disabilities, impairment and neurodiversity</i> . Taunton, UK: Somerset NHS Foundation Trust Knowledge & Library Service.

Content
GUIDELINES SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS REVIEWS STUDIES CASE REPORT ARTICLES CONFERENCE PAPERS POSTER WEB PAGE

Summary of results
<p>Please note, this evidence summary may have been generated in part by using AI. If we have used AI tools to conduct elements of this search for you, you will find a summary of the tools and prompts used at the end of this document, along with the keywords and search strategy.</p> <p>Across all these populations – whether women with intellectual disabilities, autistic women, or women with ADHD – menopause and perimenopause remain under-researched and frequently</p>



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overlooked in practice (Corrigan, S. et al. [2026](#)- and [2025](#); [Deierlein, A. L. 2025](#)). This opens the door for diagnosis overshadowing.

Another theme is the **lack of representation in mainstream policy and guidelines**: for example, the NICE guidelines updated this April ([NG23](#)) don't dedicate a section to intellectual/learning disabilities or the neurodiverse population. However, there is a growing recognition and increase in publications, specifically on autistic individuals.

1. Women with **intellectual disabilities (ID)**:

Corrigan, S. et al. ([2026](#) and [2025](#)) found that menopausal symptoms are linked to mental health difficulties and may be associated with mental health challenges that are often misunderstood or misinterpreted, potentially resulting in an overshadowed diagnosis.

According to a 2023 conference paper by [Avery, K., Flexer, L., and Noble, M.](#), individuals with learning disabilities tend to experience early menopause. However, there is considerable variation in how menopause symptoms are managed within this group, as shown by data from seventy-six patient records across seven GP practices in Southwest England. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is rarely offered, largely because of insufficient evidence regarding its effects on people with learning disabilities. These findings were supported by Bontoft, C. et al. ([2026](#)) in their service evaluation for Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust.

As professionals gain more knowledge about menopause, their ability to advocate and assist patients improves. Still, GPs face challenges engaging with patients who have intellectual disabilities (ID) and worry about monitoring them if HRT is prescribed. Psychiatrists can act as advocates, and proactive care—along with involvement from carers—can help support ID patients and reassure GPs when considering HRT. Recommendations include appointing champions on menopause-related topics, providing accessible resources, training staff and carers, and making reasonable adjustments such as creating specific clinical spaces and targeted menopause screening Bontoft, C. et al. ([2026](#)).

Mackay, K., Wee, C. and Acton, D. ([2026](#)) conducted a retrospective study using data from 555 women aged 40–60 with intellectual disabilities. They found similar outcomes: there is a gap in recognising menopause and a wide range of management approaches, highlighting the need for improved training, accessible screening tools, and more personalised support.

Moore, K., Reidy, M. and Foran, S. ([2026](#)) also emphasise the necessity for specific guidelines to assist women with intellectual disabilities.

This is also highlighted by a pilot project at Careggi University Hospital in Florence ([Becorpi, A. et al. 2023](#)), which has developed training for providers to support women with intellectual disabilities. This was within the PASS programme, a pathway dedicated to people with special needs.

Additionally, Langer-Shapland, K. Minton, S. J. and Richards, N. ([2023](#)) highlighted from a qualitative study with 5 women with lived experience that social connection, understanding menopause and recognising symptoms as well as managing it independently are themes that professionals need to consider when discussing about menopause treatments.

2. Women with **Down syndrome**:

I have found a limited amount of literature that specifically examines this population. However, according to Coughlan, G.T. et al. ([2024](#)), menopause tends to occur earlier in this group, at around 45 years of age.

3. **Neurodiverse women**:

a. **ADHD women**:



The perimenopause and menopause periods affect this population severely ([Jakobsdottir Smari, U. et al. 2025](#)). Due to the level of dopamine and serotonin, there is a greater difficulty with concentration, mood disorder, and this can also affect the management of osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease that increase at the menopause stage.

Other changes observed for ADHD women: sleep disturbance, mood dysregulation, deficit in executive control and attention.

Kooij, J.S. ([2024](#)) also mentioned potential overlap between perimenopausal/menopausal symptoms and ADHD traits, which can lead to diagnostic overshadowing.

The latest article by Wynchank, D. & Kooij, S. ([2026](#)) discusses the limited understanding of how ADHD treatments affect post-menopausal women. They suggest that decreased oestrogen levels may lead to reduced effectiveness of psychostimulant medications.

To help with oestrogen levels, oestrogen therapy can offer multiple benefits, such as improving vasomotor symptoms or sleep disturbances, and may be used alongside standard ADHD medications.

However, before starting menopause hormone therapy, women should be screened for cardiovascular, thromboembolic, and breast cancer risks. The recommended therapy should be tailored based on an evaluation of risk versus benefit, and each patient should receive individualised management. Wynchank, D. & Kooij, S. ([2026](#)) also highlight beginning treatment with the lowest effective dose, adhering to international guidelines, and only after ruling out contraindications like a history of venous thromboembolism, active or past breast cancer, uncontrolled hypertension, or liver disease.

It's also important to conduct a thorough diagnosis and have a health history discussion. Management should be multidisciplinary with experts in adult ADHD and menopausal care, and an annual review should be implemented to ensure ongoing support.

To complement this, I have included two more articles by Kooij, J.J.S. et al. ([2025](#)) and Wynchank, D., de Jong, M. and Kooij, S.J.J.S. ([2026](#)) that examine how hormonal fluctuations interact with ADHD throughout women's lives.

b. Autistic women:

A common observation in studies is that menopause symptoms often appear with greater intensity and complexity ([Badgett, N. M. et al. 2026](#); [Piper, M. A. and R. A. Charlton 2026](#); [Charlton, R.A. et al. 2025](#); [Cusano, J. L. et al. 2025](#); [Adams, D., Sawhney, I. and Shah, C. 2025](#); [Grant, A. et al. 2025](#); [Brady, M.J. et al. 2024](#); [Karavidas, M. and de Visser, R.O. 2022](#); [Moseley, R.L., Druce, T. and Turner-Cobb, J.M. 2021](#) and [2020](#)).

Symptoms reported by autistic women on menopause/perimenopause are: "hot flashes, amplified sensory sensitivities (i.e., atypical sensory experience, increased emotional volatility, behavioural challenges, sleep challenges, and cognitive impairments related to focus, memory, and decision making" and altered sexual function, headache/migraine ([Badgett, N. M. et al. 2026](#); [Cusano, J. L. et al. 2025](#); [Benevides, T.W. et al. 2024](#)). Common autistic characteristics can also be exacerbated during this period to the point that it makes it difficult to understand what an autistic challenge would be and what would be attributed to menopause, hence the importance of having a multidisciplinary approach. Menopause for autistic women may also affect behaviour with "difficulties with time management, task initiation and completion, social interaction, and flexibility" as well as sensory issues ([Badgett, N. M. et al. 2026](#); [Piper, M. A. and R. A. Charlton 2026](#); [Charlton, R.A. et al. 2025](#); [Cusano, J. L. et al. 2025](#); [Grant, A. et al. 2025](#); [Brady, M.J. et al. 2024](#)) or mental health difficulties such as depression ([Groenman, A.P. et al. 2022](#)).

All these challenges may hinder their access to health support. This can also be further increased by the difficulty for them to recognise and understand what is happening inside their body (interoceptive awareness), which also add to the difficulties to engage with health professionals and can lead to diagnosis overshadowing.



To add, the limited understanding of the interplay between menopausal symptoms and autism traits has resulted in this population being underserved or having to depend on potentially less reliable resources.

In terms of solution, Rynkiewicz, A. et al. (2025) reported the treatment for a 53-year-old autistic woman, with a combination of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), mindfulness meditation, and treatment (for a previously undiagnosed pituitary disorder), which significantly improved vasomotor symptoms, but more limited improvement in psychological and sexual domains. Other useful advice mentioned proactive and individualised care, specifically plan for women approaching perimenopause, providing accessible information for both patients, families and carers, and training for professionals, carers and social care professionals and investigating peer support ([Adams, D., Sawhney, I. and Shah, C. 2025](#), [Piper, M. A. and R. A. Charlton 2026](#); [Grant, A. et al. 2025](#); [Karavidas, M. and de Visser, R.O. 2022](#); Moseley, R.L., Druce, T. and Turner-Cobb, J.M. 2021 and 2020)

To complement this, I have added a reflection and point of view of an autistic person about menopause and what it feels like for her. This brings to life what has been accounted in academic papers ([Edwards-Adams, K. 2025](#)).

4. **Good practices** for this population group

Awareness workshops and empowerment programmes were delivered in Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust (2025), and another programme was developed in partnership with Ulster University (2025)

5. **Measures**

Apart from the general widely use rating scale such as the Kupperman Index, Menopause Rating Scale, Menopause Specific Quality of Life questionnaire and the Greene Climacteric Scale, I haven't found specific scales for neurodiverse, or intellectual/ learning disabilities population. This can be explained by the lack of robust research for this population.

A supplementary document is a review on menopause for patients with disabilities ([Harris, J.A. and Kalpakjian, C.Z. 2026](#)) which mentions information on screening, tests and treatment that may be consider and adapted for people with learning/intellectual disabilities and the neurodiverse population.

I hope this is helpful. Please contact the Library if you would like any further information or would like to revise your search: library@somersetft.nhs.uk.

We would like to capture information about the impact this evidence search has had on your practice or decision—making. We can use this to promote this service to others within the Trust and it also ensures this service continues to develop and meet the needs of everyone who uses it. Please take a few moments to complete our short [impact survey](#).

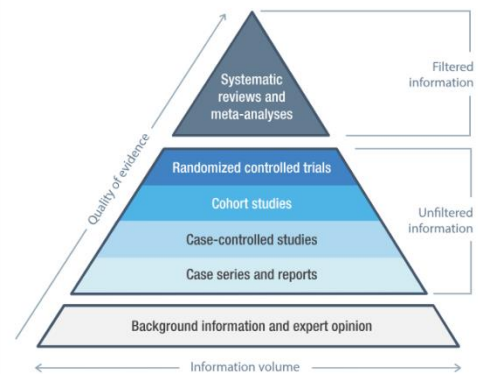
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For your information, and to help you assess the quality of the research, here is a [hierarchy of the quality of evidence](#) that you may find useful:



GUIDELINES

Menopause: identification and management (NG23)

Authors: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

Last updated April, 2026

Abstract: This guideline covers identifying and managing menopause, including in people with premature ovarian insufficiency. It aims to improve the consistency of support and information provided to people experiencing menopause

URL: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23>

[Back to top](#)

SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

Mental health outcomes across the reproductive life course among women with disabilities: a systematic review

Authors: Deierlein, A. L.; Park, C.; Patel, N.; Gagnier, R. and Thorpe, M.

Publication Date: Aug , 2025

Journal: Arch Womens Ment Health 28(4), pp. 647–664

Abstract: Purpose: This systematic review examined literature on mental health outcomes among women with disabilities living in high-income countries within the context of reproductive health, spanning menstruation through menopause. Methods: Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines, we searched MEDLINE, CINAHL, and PsycINFO databases for studies published through June 2023. Eligible studies were observational, quantitative, and included a comparison group without disabilities. Results: A total of 2,520 studies were evaluated and 27 studies met inclusion criteria. These studies assessed mental health during prepregnancy, pregnancy, postpartum, and parenting among women with and without disabilities. None of the studies examined reproductive health time periods related to menstruation, fertility, or menopause. Women of reproductive age with disabilities were more likely to have poor mental health outcomes compared to women without disabilities. During pregnancy and the postpartum, women with disabilities were at greater risk of diagnosed perinatal mental disorders and psychiatric-related healthcare visits. Findings also suggested mental distress and inadequate emotional and social support related to parenting among women with disabilities. The greatest risks of poor mental health outcomes were often observed among women with intellectual and developmental disabilities and among women with multiple types of disabilities, compared to women without disabilities. Conclusions: Routine reproductive



healthcare visits provide significant prevention and treatment opportunities for poor mental health among women with disabilities. Further research examining mental health outcomes within the context of reproductive health, especially understudied areas of menstruation, fertility, parenting, and menopause, among women with disabilities is needed.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12283890/>

Autism and the Menopause Transition: A Mixed-Methods Systematic Review

Authors: Grant, A.;Axbey, H.;Holloway, W.;Caemawr, S.;Craine, M.;Lim, H.;Shaw, S. C. K. and Ellis, R.

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: Autism Adulthood 25739581251369452, pp. 25739581251369452

Abstract: Background: The menopause transition commonly occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 years. In a general population, hormonal shifts result in a range of biological, psychological, and social changes. Recently, research has begun to focus on Autistic people's experiences of the menopause. Methods: We undertook a prospectively registered (PROSPERO: CRD42023450736) systematic review of research and first-hand accounts from grey literature related to Autism and menopause. We utilised the Joanna Briggs Institute convergent integrated synthesis approach. Results: Our search identified eight studies and seven pieces of grey literature, primarily comprising Autistic people. No studies evaluated interventions or provided data from those supporting Autistic people. We developed three themes. First, "knowledge of the menopause transition and peer support" focused on Autistic people's lack of knowledge of menopause symptoms, including differences for Autistic people, and the role of peer support in obtaining knowledge. Second, "Autistic people's experiences of menopausal symptoms" describes a broad range of negative symptoms which sometimes had significant impacts on mental health and daily activities. Limited quantitative evidence highlighted increased menopause symptom severity for Autistic people compared to non-Autistic comparison groups. Menopause symptoms impacted on work and relationships, and there was an inter-relationship between menopausal symptoms and Autistic identities. Third, "treatment of menopause symptoms" describes non-medical and medical approaches, including Hormone Replacement Therapy, to reduce symptom impacts. Most reports of medical treatment highlighted barriers to access, or negative experiences of appointments. Conclusion: There is a clear need for better menopause supports for Autistic people. This should include Autism-friendly information to increase knowledge of menopause, and how it may impact Autistic people. Corresponding information should also be available for health professionals, with systemic barriers to healthcare also reduced to allow the best chance for Autistic people to receive menopause support. Autism-specific menopause peer support may be worthy of evaluation.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7618340/>

[Back to top](#)

REVIEWS

Experiences of autistic women in menopause: brief review and recommendations for practice and research

Authors: Badgett, N. M.;Taylor-Swanson, L.;Quist, S.;Price, J. and Villanueva, J.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Front Reprod Health 8, pp. 1762773

Abstract: Autistic women navigating the menopause transition face a constellation of challenges that remain critically understudied. This paper explores the intersection of autism-specific traits and menopausal symptoms, with a focus on interoceptive awareness (IA)-the



ability to perceive internal bodily signals-which is frequently dysregulated in autistic individuals. Dysregulated IA may contribute to misinterpretation of menopausal symptoms, which in turn amplifies vasomotor severity, anxiety, depression, and distress during this life stage. Systemic barriers further complicate care access. Autistic women often encounter communication challenges with healthcare providers, limited provider knowledge of autism and menopause, and reduced social support. Addressing these gaps requires interdisciplinary approaches, including autism-informed health education, clinician training, IA-targeted interventions, and peer support networks. This paper calls for expanded research into the relationship between autism, interoception, and menopause to inform clinical practice and improve quality of life for autistic women during midlife transitions.

URL: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12960609/>

Menopause in Patients With Disabilities

Authors: Harris, J. A. and Kalpakjian, C. Z.

Publication Date: Apr 22 , 2026

Journal: Clin Obstet Gynecol

Abstract: This review covers menopause physiology, screening, treatment, and experience for women with physical, sensory, and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Menopause is a near-universal physiological experience for women with disabilities, but the menopause experience and management may vary widely due to differences or barriers related to cognition, communication, mobility, and disability-related medical conditions. While there are very limited trials of menopause treatments in populations of women with disabilities, there is substantial literature on the experience of menopause among these populations, and thoughtful extrapolations of available evidence support aggressive, evidence-based treatment for burdensome menopause symptoms.

Access or request full

text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1097/GRF.0000000000001020>

Understanding the menopausal experiences of women with intellectual disabilities: A scoping review

Authors: Moore, K.;Reidy, M. and Foran, S.

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: J Intellect Disabil 30(1), pp. 107–136

Abstract: During the process of ageing, women experience important hormonal, endocrine and biological changes. Menopause is a natural phenomenon in female development, during which women's ovarian function shifts from a reproductive to a non-reproductive state. The experience of menopause is unique for every woman, including women with intellectual disabilities. Globally, the available literature on women with intellectual disabilities and menopause focuses on providing medical insights into onset and symptoms and little attention has been paid to documenting how menopause affects women themselves. This represents a significant gap in understanding how women understand this change in life and has been a key justification for the need for this research. This scoping review aims to consider published studies capturing the perceptions, experiences and attitudes of women with intellectual disabilities and their caregivers as they transition through the menopause.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC13049219/>



Pharmacological Management of ADHD in Women Across Perimenopause, Menopause and Post-Menopause

Authors: Wynchank, D. and Kooij, S.

Publication Date: May , 2026

Journal: Drugs Aging 43(5), pp. 385–395

Abstract: Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in women is frequently underdiagnosed and undertreated, particularly during midlife when the neuroendocrine changes of perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause can exacerbate or unmask underlying symptoms. Clinical presentations of ADHD in the (peri)menopause often include worsening inattention, emotional dysregulation, and heightened anxiety or depressive symptoms, accompanied by vasomotor disturbances, sleep disruption and subjective cognitive complaints such as brain fog and memory impairment. This narrative review integrates current evidence concerning the pharmacological management of ADHD in women across the final reproductive hormonal transition. We outline diagnostic complexities arising from a symptomatic overlap between ADHD and (peri)menopausal symptoms. Evidence for the efficacy and safety of stimulant and non-stimulant medications in this population is limited, with no randomised controlled trials specific to (peri)menopausal women. Current practice relies on expert consensus, extrapolation from younger cohorts and small observational studies. Practical clinical guidance is provided for initiating and adjusting ADHD pharmacotherapy during hormonal transitions, incorporating individualised dosing, cardiovascular monitoring and consideration of comorbidities. The potential role of menopausal hormone therapy as an adjunctive strategy for mood, sleep and cognitive symptoms is discussed and practical guidance is provided for clinicians initiating pharmacotherapy in (peri)menopausal and post-menopausal women with ADHD, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary and collaborative patient-centred care. Research priorities include controlled trials evaluating stimulant-menopausal hormone therapy combinations and optimal dose adjustment protocols.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1007/s40266-026-01291-z>

The Impact of Menopause on the Mental Health of Women With an Intellectual Disability: A Scoping Review

Authors: Corrigan, S.;McCarron, M.;McCallion, P. and Burke, E.

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: J Appl Res Intellect Disabil 38(1), pp. e70017

Abstract: Background: Negative mental health implications of menopause found in the general population, combined with high rates of mental health conditions found in women with intellectual disabilities, provide rationale to examine the existing literature to determine the impact of menopause on women with intellectual disabilities. Methods: The review was conducted using scoping review methodology by Arksey and O'Malley. A systematic search was conducted across multiple databases. Relevant articles were screened according to inclusion/exclusion criteria. Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis was utilised to identify themes. Results: After screening, eight articles satisfied the inclusion/exclusion criteria, and after thematic analysis, themes found were: changes in mood, lack of reporting of psychological symptoms and difficulty attributing psychological symptoms to menopause. Conclusions: Findings indicate the paucity of literature and the lack of attention paid to examining the impact of menopause on the experiences and mental health of women with intellectual disabilities.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11774133/>



Research advances and future directions in female ADHD: the lifelong interplay of hormonal fluctuations with mood, cognition, and disease

Authors: Kooij, J. J. S.; de Jong, Maxime; Agnew-Blais, Jessica; Amoretti, Silvia; Bang Madsen, Kathrine; Barclay, Isabella; Bolte, Sven; Borg Skoglund, Charlotte; Broughton, Thomas; Carucci, Sara; van Dijken, Dorenda K. E.; Ernst, Julia; French, Blandine; Frick, Matilda A.; Galera, Cedric; Groenman, Annabeth P.; Kopp Kallner, Helena; Kerner Auch Koerner, Julia; Kittel-Schneider, Sarah; Manor, Iris, et al

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: Frontiers in Global Womens Health 6, pp. 1613628

Abstract: Introduction: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in girls and women is under-recognised and under-researched, despite increasing awareness of clinical challenges and unmet needs. This review by the Eunethydis Special Interest Group on Female ADHD, addresses current knowledge and identifies research gaps for future work. Issues in women with ADHD across the lifespan such as late diagnosis, pubertal development, sexual health, hormonal birth control, executive function difficulties, and gynaecological disorders associated with ADHD are highlighted. Methods: The review synthesises existing literature and self-reported experiences of women with ADHD to explore the impact of hormonal fluctuations puberty, menstrual cycle, pregnancy, (peri)menopause] on ADHD symptoms and mood disturbances. It examines the interplay of oestrogen and progesterone with dopaminergic pathways, when periods of lower oestrogen may affect cognition, as well as the manifestation of executive function deficits, and the intersection of ADHD with reproductive health. Results: Hormonal transitions exacerbate ADHD symptoms and mood disturbances, yet pharmacological research and tailored treatments are lacking. Executive function deficits manifest differently in girls and women with ADHD and are influenced by neuropsychological and neurobiological profiles. Diagnostic practices and sociocultural factors contribute to delayed diagnoses, increasing the risk of comorbidities, impaired functioning, and diminished quality of life. Undiagnosed women have increased vulnerability to premenstrual dysphoric disorder, postpartum depression, and cardiovascular disease during perimenopause. Discussion: Longitudinal, sex-specific studies incorporating hormonal status and lived experience are needed. Individualised interventions should be developed to address the unique needs of girls and women with ADHD. Addressing these gaps will advance more equitable diagnosis, management, and support for girls and women with ADHD, improving outcomes across the female lifespan. Copyright © 2025 Kooij, de Jong, Agnew-Blais, Amoretti, Bang Madsen, Barclay, Bolte, Borg Skoglund, Broughton, Carucci, van Dijken, Ernst, French, Frick, Galera, Groenman, Kopp Kallner, Kerner auch Koerner, Kittel-Schneider, Manor, Martin, Matera, Parlatini, Philipsen, Ramos-Quiroga, Rapoport, Remnelius, Senequier, Thorell, Wittekoek and Wynchank.

Access or request full text: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/global-womens-health/articles/10.3389/fgwh.2025.1613628/full>

ADHD Symptoms in Females of Childhood, Adolescent, Reproductive and Menopause Period

Authors: Antoniou, Evangelia; Rigas, Nikolaos; Orovou, Eirini; Papatrechas, Alexandros and Sarella, Angeliki

Publication Date: 2021

Journal: Materia Sociomedica 33(2), pp. 114–118

Abstract: Background: The attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) was initially considered a male disorder. As it has recently been shown, however, its presentation in girls



is a topic of increasing scientific interest and research. There have been quite a few studies so far showing the differences in the symptoms between genders and the progression of the condition depending on the individual's profile. However, there are some special characteristics in the female gender, including neuropathology and hormonal factors, that play a decisive role in understating ADHD in women. Although it is known that the symptoms in ADHD girls are overshadowed by those of the impulsive and hyperactive boys, an effort was made in this study to highlight ADHD symptoms in women from childhood to menopause. Objective: Taking into account the small but significant differences in the development of ADHD in women, this literature review aims at identifying the special characteristics of ADHD symptoms in all stages of a woman's life from childhood to menopause. Being aware of these signs is important to provide the best quality of health care in ADHD women. Methods: A review of the literature was conducted through the databases on the occurrence of ADHD symptoms in girls, adolescents, women of childbearing age and women in menopause. Results: ADHD and its comorbid disorders affect the female sex throughout its life. The hormonal fluctuations and transitional periods of life seem to influence the symptoms of ADHD more. Conclusion: Higher awareness is thus required by health professionals about ADHD behavioural characteristics in girls, adolescent girls and women in their productive period or in menopause to identify the special signs defining the disease, to treat them early and protect the women's mental health. Copyright © 2021 Evangelia Antoniou, Nikolaos Rigas , Eirini Orovou, Alexandros Papatrechas, Angeliki Sarella.

URL: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8385721/>

[Back to top](#)

STUDIES

Using Network Analysis to Understand the Associations Between Menopausal Symptoms and Mental Health in Women With Intellectual Disabilities

Authors: Corrigan, S.;McCallion, P.;McCarron, M.;de Vries, J. and Burke, E.

Publication Date: Mar , 2026

Journal: J Appl Res Intellect Disabil 39(2), pp. e70216

Abstract: BACKGROUND: Women with intellectual disabilities typically face high rates of mental health and communication difficulties. Given associations between menopause and mental health in the general population and the lack of research on this topic in women with intellectual disabilities, it is critical to investigate associations between menopause and mental health in this population. METHOD: Cross-sectional data were drawn from a cohort study in Ireland (n = 104). Measures included data on menopause, challenging behaviours and psychotropic medication. Associations between menopausal symptoms and mental health were examined through regression and network analysis. RESULTS: Vasomotor symptoms, fatigue, and mood changes were associated with menopause-specific anxiety, which was further linked to challenging behaviour and psychotropic medication use. CONCLUSIONS: Menopausal symptoms were associated with mental health challenges, which, in turn, could influence challenging behaviour and psychotropic medication use in this population; implying that menopause-specific mental health symptoms may be overlooked and incorrectly treated.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC13020530/>



Understanding perimenopause and menopause treatment in women with intellectual disability: a retrospective cohort study

Authors: Mackay, Kirstyn;Wee, Christine and Acton, Danny

Publication Date: 2026

Journal: Tizard Learning Disability Review 31(1), pp. 11–21

Abstract: Purpose: This study aims to explore how menopause is recognised, recorded and treated in women with intellectual disability receiving care from community learning disability services. It sought to identify gaps in diagnosis, treatment provision and access to routine health checks, as well as regional disparities across a NHS Trust in the Northwest of England. Design/methodology/approach: A retrospective cohort study was conducted using routinely collected clinical data from 555 women aged 40–60 with intellectual disability, obtained from electronic health records across multiple community learning disability teams. Descriptive and comparative analyses were performed to examine menopause diagnosis rates, treatment patterns and annual health check (AHC) participation. Findings: Only 4% of women had a recorded diagnosis of menopause or perimenopause. However, a greater proportion received menopause-related interventions, indicating a potential gap in formal recognition. The use of Hormone Replacement Therapy varied significantly across regions, with less than half of eligible women having had an AHC. Practical implications: Findings support the need for accessible screening tools, workforce education and equitable service commissioning. Originality/value: To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is one of the first studies to audit menopause care for women with intellectual disability at scale using data from electronic patient records. The findings highlight systemic under-recognition, inconsistent documentation and inequities in access to care, calling for improved screening, professional training and inclusive policy responses.

URL: [Your interlibrary loan requests > SWIMS catalogue](#)

Common and unique menopause experiences among autistic and non-autistic people: A qualitative study

Authors: Piper, M. A. and Charlton, R. A.

Publication Date: Feb , 2026

Journal: J Health Psychol 31(2), pp. 801–816

Abstract: Autistic people face both similar challenges to non-autistic people as they navigate menopause and additional unique challenges. Semi-structured interviews with 15 autistic and 14 non-autistic adults (assigned female at birth), explored experiences of menopause. Thematic analysis was carried out for the autistic and non-autistic groups separately. Analysis yielded four overarching themes: information about menopause, experiences of menopause, medical support for menopause and backdrop to the menopause. Each of these contained subthemes which indicated both shared and unique experiences between the groups. Both groups reported a lack of information about menopause, endured negative psychological changes during menopause and experienced menopause alongside other important life events. Autistic people faced unique challenges during menopause, including medical professionals not accommodating autistic differences, uncertainty-induced anxiety and the lifelong impact of living without an autism diagnosis. This study highlights the need for tailored care for this group during the menopause transition.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12886563/>



Self-Reported Psychological, Somatic, and Vasomotor Symptoms at Different Stages of the Menopause for Autistic and Non-autistic People

Authors: Charlton, R. A.;Happe, F. G.;Shand, A. J.;Mandy, W. and Stewart, G. R.

Publication Date: May , 2025

Journal: J Womens Health (Larchmt) 34(5), pp. 622–634

Abstract: Background: There is growing awareness that the experiences of neurodivergent people during menopause are not well understood. Menopause may be particularly challenging for autistic people due to common co-occurring conditions such as depression and differences in sensory processing. The few (mostly qualitative) studies to explore autism and menopause suggest that autistic traits may be exacerbated. Methods: In an online cross-sectional survey, we examined self-reported menopause symptoms of 342 people (autistic, n = 242 and non-autistic, n = 100) at different stages of their reproductive life (premenopausal approximately 20% of sample], menopausal approximately 30%], postmenopausal approximately 50%]). Results: Autistic people reported significantly higher rates of bothersome psychological and somatic menopause symptoms than non-autistic people, but no differences were observed for vasomotor symptoms. Results indicated different patterns of psychological, somatic, and vasomotor symptoms between the autistic and non-autistic groups. People in the menopause and postmenopause groups reported negative changes in symptoms, but non-autistic women reported these as more negative than autistic women. Whether this finding is related to the observation that autistic people report more bothersome psychological and somatic symptoms before the menopause requires further investigation. Conclusion: This cross-sectional analysis suggests that autistic people may experience more bothersome symptoms during menopause compared with non-autistic people. Longitudinal studies examining change are required to fully understand the variables that impact individual experiences for autistic people.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1089/jwh.2024.0784>

The transition to menopause for autistic individuals in the US: a qualitative study of health care challenges and support needs

Authors: Cusano, J. L.;Erwin, V.;Miller, D. and Rothman, E. F.

Publication Date: Feb 25 , 2025

Journal: Menopause 32(6), pp. 505–512

Abstract: Objective: The goal of the current study was to better understand autistic people's experiences with the menopause transition, by focusing on their symptoms, healthcare interactions, and receipt of informal support. Methods: This was a qualitative research study. We conducted one-on-one videotelephone interviews with 21 autistic adults who had experienced, or were currently experiencing, perimenopause in the United States. Data were coded by two independent coders. We used a thematic analysis approach. Results: The analysts derived several overarching themes related to perimenopausal symptoms, barriers to healthcare, and informal support networks. Participants reported increased sensory sensitivities during perimenopause and reported that these severely impacted their quality of life. These sensory sensitivities also compounded vasomotor symptoms of perimenopause causing an extreme and overwhelming confluence of symptoms and difficulties. Despite this, many participants felt that their healthcare providers supported them insufficiently. Participants felt unprepared for the intensification of sensory sensitivities during the menopause transition due to a lack of information about perimenopause from healthcare providers and because their social support network members lacked information about perimenopause. Conclusions: Autistic people face unique challenges during the menopause



transition, which may include managing sensory sensitivities and navigating healthcare systems. Results highlight the need for education about menopause earlier in life for autistic people. Findings further demonstrate the need for holistic approaches to perimenopausal symptom management and better training for providers on the unique needs of perimenopausal autistic people.

Access or request full

text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1097/GME.0000000000002520>

Perimenopausal symptoms in women with and without ADHD: A population-based cohort study

Authors: Jakobsdottir Smari, U.;Valdimarsdottir, U. A.;Wynchank, D.;de Jong, M.;Aspelund, T.;Hauksdottir, A.;Thordardottir, E. B.;Tomasson, G.;Jakobsdottir, J.;Lu, D.;Nevriana, A.;Larsson, H.;Kooij, S. and Zoega, H.

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: Eur Psychiatry 68(1), pp. e133

Abstract: Background: Knowledge of the impact of perimenopause on women with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is lacking. We compared levels of perimenopausal symptoms and prevalence of severe perimenopausal symptoms among women with and without ADHD across age groups. Methods: In this cohort study, we used data from the population-based Stress-and-Gene-Analysis cohort study. ADHD diagnosis was self-reported at baseline and 5-year follow-up. At follow-up, we assessed ADHD symptoms using the Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale, perimenopausal symptoms (psychological, somatic, and urogenital) using Menopause Rating Scale (MRS), and general physical symptoms using Patient Health Questionnaire. We described mean scores and mean difference on MRS among women with and without ADHD with linear regression models and contrasted the prevalence of severe perimenopausal symptoms among women with and without ADHD, calculating prevalence ratios (PRs) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs) using modified Poisson regression models. Results: Women with ADHD (n = 535) had higher total perimenopausal symptom scores (18.0 vs. 13.0, $p < 0.01$) than women without ADHD (n = 4,857). The difference was most pronounced among women aged 35-39 years (19.0 vs. 12.5, $p < 0.01$). The prevalence of severe perimenopausal symptoms was significantly higher among women with ADHD compared to those without, both overall (54.2% vs. 30.1%, PR = 1.80, 95% CI = 1.64-1.98) and on all subdimensions (psychological: 58.6% vs. 36.0%, PR = 1.63, 95% CI = 1.51-1.76; somatic: 30.4% vs. 13.9%, PR = 2.20, 95% CI = 1.88-2.57; uro-genital: 43.2% vs. 27.5%, PR = 1.57, 95% CI = 1.40-1.77). Conclusion: Women with ADHD have higher prevalence of severe perimenopausal symptoms. These symptoms present at an earlier age than among women without ADHD, indicating an earlier onset age of perimenopause in ADHD.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12538516/>

Brief Report: Under-Identification of Symptomatic Menopause in Publicly-Insured Autistic People

Authors: Benevides, T. W.;Cook, B.;Klinger, L. G.;McLean, K. J.;Wallace, G. L.;Carey, M. E.;Lee, W. L.;Ventimiglia, J.;Schiff, L. D. and Shea, L.

Publication Date: Aug 29, 2024

Journal: J Autism Dev Disord

Abstract: Menopause is a normal part of aging and in the general population is associated with chronic conditions that impact health, mortality, and well-being. Menopause is



experienced differently by autistic individuals, although no studies have investigated this topic in a large sample. The purpose of this study was to investigate rates of, and factors associated with symptomatic menopause among autistic individuals and to identify the prevalence of co-occurring conditions in symptomatic individuals. We included autistic females aged 35-70 years enrolled for 10 + months in 2014-2016 Medicare and/or Medicaid (n = 26,904), excluding those with gender dysphoria. Those with symptomatic menopause were compared to a non-symptomatic reference group on demographic, enrollment characteristics, and co-occurring conditions through logistic regression. Approximately 4% of publicly-insured autistic females aged 46-70 years had symptomatic menopause in their medical records. Intellectual disability was associated with a lower likelihood of symptomatic menopause, and being Medicare-enrolled or dual-enrolled was associated with higher likelihood of having symptomatic menopause recorded. In adjusted models, rates of ADHD, anxiety and depressive disorders, headache/migraine, altered sensory experiences, altered sexual function, and sleep disturbance were significantly higher in the symptomatic menopause sample compared to the reference group. More work to better support autistic women in discussing menopausal symptoms and co-occurring conditions with primary care providers is needed, particularly among those for whom self-report of symptoms are more challenging to ascertain. Factors associated with specific types of health care coverage warrant greater investigation to support better identification.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12938728/>

"A perfect storm": Autistic experiences of menopause and midlife

Authors: Brady, M. J.; Jenkins, C. A.; Gamble-Turner, J.; Moseley, R. L.; Janse van Rensburg, M. and Matthews, R. J.

Publication Date: Jun , 2024

Journal: Autism 28(6), pp. 1405–1418

Abstract: Previous studies report that menopause can be a very difficult transition for some autistic people. This study focuses on how autistic people experience menopause and what support and information might help them. Autistic Community Research Associates played an important role in the research and co-authored this article. We held four focus groups and eight interviews online with 24 autistic participants who lived in either Canada (n = 13) or the United Kingdom (n = 11). We analysed participant conversations using a method called reflexive thematic analysis. Participants described many intense challenges during menopause. Four themes and eight subthemes were identified across participant groups: (1) Complexity, multiplicity and intensity of symptoms (0 subthemes); (2) Life experience and adversity converging at midlife (three subthemes); (3) The importance of knowledge and connection (two subthemes); and (4) Barriers to support and care (three subthemes). The experiences of our participants may not be the same as other autistic people, and the study could have been more inclusive of diverse autistic groups. However, hearing about the experiences of others may provide reassurance to autistic people who struggle with menopause and let them know they are not alone.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11135000/>



'It should be more outspoken and not hushed away, not like put in a dark box': An interpretative phenomenological analysis of experiences of menopause voiced by women with learning disabilities

Authors: Langer-Shapland, Katie; Minton, Stephen J. and Richards, Nel

Publication Date: 2023

Journal: British Journal of Learning Disabilities 51(4), pp. 509–521

Abstract: Background: There is little research into experiences of menopause voiced by women with learning disabilities, who can be neglected in academic research. There is a particular lack of knowledge around the psychological and social experiences of menopause in this population, and how changes are managed. This study sought to explore these experiences. Methods: Experiences of five women with lived experience of menopause, being seen by community National Health Services specialising in learning disabilities, were captured with semistructured interviews and analysed using interpretive phenomenological analysis. Findings: Five superordinate themes were identified, involving the importance of having information about menopause, challenges of periods, observable changes in menopause, the importance of social connection, and managing menopause independently. Conclusions: This study highlights the need for clinicians and carers to understand the variety of impacts menopause can have on women with learning disabilities, including emotional and social aspects, and the need to initiate conversations regarding menopause and available treatments. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2024 APA, all rights reserved)

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1111/bld.12527>

Menstruation and menopause in autistic adults: Periods of importance?

Authors: Groenman, A. P.; Torenvliet, C.; Radhoe, T. A.; Agelink van Rentergem, J. A. and Geurts, H. M.

Publication Date: Aug , 2022

Journal: Autism 26(6), pp. 1563–1572

Abstract: Autism spectrum conditions were once seen as a predominantly male condition, but this has caused research to have little focus on women. Therefore, little is known about menstruation and menopause in autism spectrum conditions. Some smaller studies indicate that autistic individuals might suffer from increased difficulties surrounding these events. This study aimed to investigate whether autistic women experience more frequent premenstrual dysphoric disorder, causing extreme physical, emotional, and functional impairment. In a partly overlapping sample, we also examined whether women with autism spectrum condition experience increased complaints surrounding menopause. We did not find an increased prevalence of premenstrual dysphoric disorder in autism spectrum conditions (14.3%) compared with non-autistic women (9.5%). Those with autism spectrum conditions did experience increased menopausal complaints. These menopausal complaints were associated with higher levels of depression and autistic traits. In non-autistic women, menopausal complaints were associated with increased inattention, hyperactivity/impulsivity (i.e. attention deficit hyperactivity disorder traits), and depression. With this work, we show the important role that major reproductive milestones can have in an autistic woman's life.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9344571/>



"It's Not Just in My Head, and It's Not Just Irrelevant": Autistic Negotiations of Menopausal Transitions

Authors: Karavidas, M. and de Visser, R. O.

Publication Date: 2022

Journal: J Autism Dev Disord 52(3), pp. 1143–1155

Abstract: Physical and psychological changes during menopause can be especially tumultuous for autistic people: difficulties with sensory sensitivity and daily functioning may be exacerbated. Through individual interviews, we examined the language used by seven peri- or post-menopausal autistic people to construct their experiences, and to consider the implications for their wellbeing and identities. Our analysis, which utilised thematic decomposition, yielded three discursive themes. The theme "Uncertainty about Changes" addressed how limited awareness and understanding of menopause combined with difficulties recognising internal states. However, with "Growing Self-Awareness and Self-Care", some participants made conscious efforts to resist negative societal constructions of both autism and menopause. The theme "Navigating Support Options" addressed the interpersonal and systemic barriers participants faced when seeking support. There is a need for accessible information for autistic people experiencing menopause, and greater professional awareness.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8854312/>

Autism research is 'all about the blokes and the kids': Autistic women breaking the silence on menopause

Authors: Moseley, R. L.; Druce, T. and Turner-Cobb, J.

Publication Date: Sep , 2021

Journal: Br J Health Psychol 26(3), pp. 709–726

Abstract: Objectives: The menopause is a major transition marked by considerable challenges to health and well-being. Its impact on autistic women has been almost largely ignored but is of significant concern, given the poorer physical and mental health, emotion regulation and coping skills, and the common social isolation of this group. We aimed to explore awareness and perception of the menopause; menopausal experiences and their impact across each individual's life; ways that menopause with autism might differ from a non-autistic menopause; and what optimal support might look like. Design: A qualitative interview study. Methods: Comprehensive interviews were conducted with 17 autistic participants (16 of whom identified as cisgender women). Inductive thematic analysis was used, guided by IPA principles and literature. Results: Four major themes were identified: (1) covering the long journey of our participants to recognizing autism in adulthood; (2) menopausal awareness and perceptions; (3) symptoms and their impact; and (4) ways that a neurodiverse menopause might differ from the norm. Menopausal experiences varied greatly and some participants experienced marked deterioration in daily function and coping skills, mental health, and social engagement. Menopausal awareness was often low, so too was confidence in help from health care professionals. Conclusions: These findings implicate the potential for menopause to severely compromise health and well-being of autistic people and indicate an area of underserved support needs.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1111/bjhp.12477>



'When my autism broke': A qualitative study spotlighting autistic voices on menopause

Authors: Moseley, R. L.; Druce, T. and Turner-Cobb, J.

Publication Date: Aug , 2020

Journal: Autism 24(6), pp. 1423–1437

Abstract: Autistic girls are known to struggle with the onset of menstruation, reporting that during their period, sensory sensitivities are heightened, it becomes more difficult to think clearly and control their emotions and they struggle more with everyday life and self-care. Yet surprisingly, nothing is known about how autistic women handle the menopausal transition in midlife. In non-autistic women, the menopause brings many physical changes and challenging symptoms from hot flushes to feeling more anxious and depressed. Because autistic women are already vulnerable to suicide, poor physical and mental health, and because they may already struggle with planning, controlling their emotions and coping with change, the menopause may be an especially challenging time. Yet, not one single study exists on the menopause in autism, so we conducted an online discussion (focus group) with seven autistic women. They confirmed that very little is known about menopause in autistic people, very little support is available and that menopause might be especially difficult for autistic people. Autism-related difficulties (including sensory sensitivity, socializing with others and communicating needs) were reported to worsen during the menopause, often so dramatically that some participants suggested they found it impossible to continue to mask their struggles. Participants also reported having extreme meltdowns, experiencing anxiety and depression, and feeling suicidal. This study highlights how important it is that professionals pay attention to menopause in autism, and discusses future research directions.

Access or request full text: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7376624/>

[Back to top](#)

CASE REPORT

Treatment of menopausal vasomotor symptoms and sensory issues in a 53-year-old autistic woman—a case report

Authors: Rynkiewicz, Agnieszka; Ferensztajn-Rochowiak, Ewa; Moseley, Rachel L.; Gamble-Turner, Julie; Hadjikhani, Nouchine; Lacroix, Adeline; Brewer Curran, A.; Sohl, Kristin and Darmochwal-Kolarz, D.

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: Psychiatria i Psychologia Kliniczna 24(4), pp. 356–362

Abstract: Considered a taboo topic in many societies, menopause in autistic women is still under-recognised, and little research addresses its impact. Existing studies suggest that this often-difficult transition period is associated with numerous unmet health needs and a frustrating lack of knowledge and support from healthcare professionals. Menopausal vasomotor symptoms, the hallmark of menopause, can intensify and worsen sensory sensitivities in many autistic women. We present the case of a 53-year-old Caucasian autistic woman without intellectual disability or other current psychiatric comorbidities. The patient underwent gynaecologic and hormonal lab testing, and was introduced to hormone replacement therapy to ameliorate symptoms of oestradiol and progesterone deficiency. Menopausal vasomotor symptoms experienced by the patient were monitored over a period of seven months following the implementation of hormone replacement therapy and nonpharmacologic approaches. Hormone replacement therapy decreased menopausal vasomotor symptoms, but not all her initial complaints. Strong sensory issues were linked to



more severe menopausal vasomotor symptoms. This case highlights the need for further research and the development of the global Extension for Community Health Outcomes (ECHO) Autism® model to advance medical care offered to autistic women during menopause.

URL: <https://www.psychiatry.com.pl/assets/pdf/artykuly/356-362-pipk-4-2024-rynkiewicz-ang-pdf.pdf>

[Back to top](#)

ARTICLES

Disparities in Hormone Replacement Therapy Prescribing for Women With Intellectual Disabilities

Authors: Bontoft, C.;Sawhney, I.;Zia, A. and Adams, D.

Publication Date: Mar , 2026

Journal: J Appl Res Intellect Disabil 39(2), pp. e70192

Abstract: Background: People with intellectual disabilities who menstruate are underrepresented in menopause research and care. Methods: A mixed-methods service evaluation was conducted in one NHS Trust. In Phase 1, prescribing data from electronic health records for women aged 40-79 with intellectual disabilities (n = 149) was extracted and statistically compared to estimates for the general population. Phase 2 comprised a focus group with psychiatrists (n = 6) and an interview with a GP (n = 1); data were analysed using framework analysis. Findings: HRT was prescribed to 3.3% of people with intellectual disabilities, versus 17.2% in the general population, indicating significantly lower prescribing ($p < 0.0001$). Qualitative themes highlighted low clinician awareness, diagnostic overshadowing, concerns about monitoring and system-level issues. Facilitators included psychiatrist advocacy, proactive carers and clearer primary-to-secondary care collaboration. Conclusions: Women with LD were substantially less likely to receive HRT, suggesting a marked inequity in menopause care. Recommendations are made to improve recognition, treatment access and outcomes.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1111/jar.70192>

'Menopause as a factor in psychological, behavioural and cognitive changes in women with learning disabilities'

Item Type: Personal Communication

Authors: Adams, D., Sawhney, I. and Shah, C.

Recipients: Anonymous, 2025

Available at: <https://journals.rcni.com/learning-disability-practice/cpd/menopause-as-a-factor-in-psychological-behavioural-and-cognitive-changes-in-women-with-learning-disabilities-ldp.2025.e2280/abs>

Menopause Through an Autistic Lens

Authors: Edwards-Adams, Keita

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: Autism in Adulthood , pp. Date of Publication: 2025

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1177/25739581251386949>



Practical tools for female-specific ADHD: The impact of hormonal fluctuations in clinical practice and from the literature

Authors: Wynchank, Dora;de Jong, Maxime and Kooij, Sandra J. J. S.

Publication Date: 2025

Journal: European Psychiatry: The Journal of the Association of European Psychiatrists 69(1), pp. e1

Abstract: Hormonal fluctuations significantly impact women with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), affecting symptom severity, mood, sleep, and treatment efficacy. Many women report cyclical variations in symptom intensity and reduced psychostimulant efficacy during the late luteal phase of their menstrual cycle. Also, during the postpartum period and in the (peri)menopause, ADHD symptoms may worsen, accompanied by increased mood and sleep disturbances. Neglecting these features specific to women with ADHD has resulted in underdiagnosis and misdiagnosis of ADHD, as well as suboptimal treatment. In addition, the accuracy of ADHD diagnosis in women is complicated by symptom masking, comorbid anxiety/depression, and referral biases. To help improve care for women with ADHD, we provide practical recommendations for assessing the impact of hormonal fluctuations in ADHD research and practice (e.g., a protocol for assessment, including menstrual cycle tracking and validated questionnaires for mood and sleep disturbances). Our recommendations are informed by extensive clinical experience and research initiatives focused on women with ADHD. We briefly describe the specifics of clinical presentation, premenstrual exacerbations of these women, and their optimal treatment. We also suggest tailored assessment, such as considering hormonal status in ADHD diagnosis and symptom tracking across menstrual, postpartum, and (peri)menopausal phases. While more research is sorely needed, recognising and identifying these hormone-related fluctuations is crucial for improving research practices and clinical management of women with ADHD.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1192/j.eurpsy.2025.10120>

Challenges faced by women with learning disabilities, when they reach the menopause transition

Authors: Briggs, P.;Barsoum, M. and Soffe, K.

Publication Date: Jun , 2023

Journal: Post Reprod Health 29(2), pp. 113–118

Abstract: In these tales, we describe the specific challenges faced by women with intellectual disability (ID), when they reach the menopause transition. Increased awareness about potential symptoms and treatment, but this group require even more individualised care, often involving extended family and carers.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.1177/20533691231179797>



How nurses can help women with learning disabilities through menopause

Authors: Trueland, Jennifer

Publication Date: 2023

Journal: Learning Disability Practice 26(1), pp. 6–8

Abstract: Menopause and perimenopause are a fact of life for most women with learning disabilities, but there is little research and information about it.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/libraries/2838/10.7748/ldp.26.1.6.s2>

[Back to top](#)

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Sex, menopause, and hormone therapy moderate the PET tau and Abeta association in cognitively unimpaired adults with Down Syndrome: Findings from the Alzheimer Biomarkers Consortium ' Down Syndrome (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Coughlan, G.T., Yuan, Z., Andrews, E.J., Boyle, R., Seto, M., Schultz, S.A., Johnson, K.A., Sperling, R.A., Properzi, M.J., Ances, B., Head, E. and Buckley, R.F.

Publication Date: 2024

Publication Details: Alzheimer's and Dementia. Conference: Alzheimer's Association International Conference, AAIC 2024. Philadelphia, PA United States. 20(Supplement 2) (no pagination); John Wiley and Sons Inc,

Abstract: Background: Virtually all adults with Down Syndrome(DS) show Alzheimer's disease(AD)-related pathologic change by the age of 40 years. While sex differences in Abeta-dependent tauopathy are apparent during early sporadic AD, sex differences in the DS population remain under-investigated. Moreover, menopause onset occurs earlier in the DS population (45 years), and it remains unknown whether menopause status and hormone therapy(HT) exposure influences Abeta-dependent tauopathy in women with DS. In a cognitively unimpaired DS population, we investigated cross-sectional associations between Abeta and regional tau as a function of sex, menopause-status, and HT-exposure. Method(s): 115 cognitively unimpaired individuals from the Alzheimer Biomarkers Consortium'Down Syndrome (Mean Age 37.9; 56 women 48%]; 13 APOE4 carriers 11%];Table 1) underwent Pittsburgh Compound-B/Florbetapir(Abeta-PET) and Flortaucipir(tau-PET). Global Abeta was transformed to centiloid scale. 10 (20.6%) women self-reported as being menopausal. 11 (20.4%) women reported HT exposure. Four a priori tau regions previously demonstrating sex differences in sporadic AD were selected (entorhinal cortex, inferior temporal gyrus, fusiform gyrus, lateral occipital cortex). Linear regressions (covarying age) examined the sex*Abeta interaction for each tau-PET outcome. Similar models were examined in the subset of women, investigating menopause-statusnot menopausal/menopausal]*Abeta and HT*Abeta interactions. Exploratory whole-brain vertex-wise tau-PET analyses were conducted with sex*Abeta and menopause*Abeta (modelled-separately) and a FDR threshold p=0.05. Result(s): The sex*Abeta interaction showed a trend level association with tau-PET, suggesting men exhibit elevated posterior-temporal and lateral-occipital tau with higher Abeta, relative to women (Figure 1). The menopause status*Abeta analyses indicated that menopausal women with higher Abeta exhibit significantly elevated temporal, lateral occipital and parietal tau (Figure 2). Sensitivity analyses covarying an age*Abeta interaction suggested that the menopause-tau association was not driven solely by advancing age. Finally, higher temporal fusiform(p=0.020) and lateral occipital(p=0.004) tau-PET signal was observed in women with HT-exposure at higher levels of Abeta, relative to women without exposure. Conclusion(s): Sex differences in the Abeta-tau association were marginal and require additional investigation. Menopause-status and HT-exposure influenced the association between Abeta and regional tau. While



our results lack statistical power and should be replicated in larger DS populations, the findings suggest that sex-specific biomarker profiles in DS may help determine sex-specific pathways and hormonal mechanisms underlying increased risk of dementia.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1002/alz.086293>

ADHD in a women during (peri)menopause: missed diagnoses and cardiac complaints (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Kooij, J.S.

Publication Date: 2024

Publication Details: European Psychiatry. Conference: 32nd European Congress of Psychiatry, EPA 2024. Budapest Hungary. 67(Supplement 1) (pp S800); Cambridge University Press,

Abstract: Introduction: (Abstract for the accepted case-based workshop by the NDAL section at EPA) Women with ADHD are underdiagnosed in mental health care, and although ADHD starts in early childhood, the symptoms and impairment of women with ADHD may only be recognised for the first time during (peri)menopause. Objective(s): The relationship between decreasing levels of estrogen and the interaction with dopamine function in the brain in women with ADHD will be discussed and illustrated by a clinical case vignette of Mary, age 54. Method(s): Mary presents with a history of repeated burnout episodes, mood swings, lifetime difficulty concentrating, planning and organising daily life, restlessness, sleep problems, and cardiac complaints. Mary has been working hard her whole life to overcome all difficulties, but her problem is she can never stop, leading to getting burnout several times. This time she is exhausted and can no longer cope; she is visiting the cardiologist for palpitations, hypertension and a recent myocardial infarction. Result(s): After a positive screening for ADHD, based on her lifetime symptoms of inattention, restlessness and impulsivity, as well as mood swings, she is referred to a psychiatrist for assessment of ADHD, mood and sleep problems. The pathophysiology behind this cluster of disorders during (peri)menopause, as well as the treatment options will be discussed based on Mary's case. Conclusion(s): Both ADHD in women, (peri)menopausal mood disorders as well as the heart complaints in women during menopause are underrecognised and undertreated, leading to unnecessary suffering and cardiac death in women. It is time for psychiatry to join forces with cardiology and gynaecology for better recognition, sharing knowledge and multidisciplinary treatment of women with mental disorders such as ADHD during menopausal transition (see www.h3-netwerk.nl).

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1192/j.eurpsy.2024.1666>

Management of the perimenopause and menopause in women with learning disability (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Avery, K., Flexer, L. and Noble, M.

Publication Date: 2023

Publication Details: Post Reproductive Health. Conference: 32nd Annual Scientific Conference of the British Menopause Society, BMS 2023. Warwickshire United Kingdom. 29(3) (pp 154-155); SAGE Publications Ltd,

Abstract: More than 15% of the global population have a learning disability (LD). Despite various laws worldwide prohibiting discrimination, late diagnosis, misdiagnosis, and inadequate treatment of the menopause is common. LD patients have early menopause and higher rates of dementia, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disease. Therefore, the risk/benefit balance for hormone replacement therapy (HRT) may be favourable in this group.



However, the limited available evidence suggests a lack of knowledge about the menopause in carers and women with LD. Objective(s): To assess HRT and vaginal oestrogen prescribing for women with LD in primary care. Method(s): We analysed prospectively collected data from seventy-six patient notes from seven GP practices in the Southwest of England. We included women over 45 years old on the LD register. Result(s): Only 8% of the women had a current HRT prescription. Twenty-three percent had been prescribed HRT at some stage. However, 94% of these women were on HRT for less than two years. Only one patient had been prescribed vaginal oestrogen. Of the 17% of women who reported menopausal symptoms, none were given HRT. Seventeen percent of women had a diagnosis of osteoporosis, with none of these women prescribed HRT. Twentythree percent had recurrent UTIs, of which none were prescribed vaginal oestrogen. One GP practice had a nominated menopause clinician. In this practice, a higher proportion of LD women (35%) were prescribed HRT compared with all other practices (17%). This did not meet statistical significance ($p = 0.09$). Conclusion(s): Our data indicate wide variation in the management of menopause in women with LD. It is particularly concerning that none of those who reported menopausal symptoms or had osteoporosis were prescribed HRT. Women with LD are an underrepresented, minority group who may struggle to advocate for themselves effectively. A history of menopausal symptoms may be difficult to ascertain from those with LD. However, women with LD may derive significant mental and physical benefit from early diagnosis and treatment of menopausal symptoms. It is imperative that clinicians in both primary and secondary care work to improve recognition of menopausal symptoms in those with LD and offer individualised, evidence-based care.

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1177/20533691231190702>

Intellectual disability and menopause: the experience of the PASS project at Careggi University Hospital in Florence, pilot program (Conference Proceeding)

Authors: Becorpi, A., Nardone, L., Padelli, A., Violo, L., Ninotta, G., Bertoli, F., Tucci, V., Petraglia, F. and Mechi, M.T.

Publication Date: 2023

Publication Details: Maturitas. Conference: EMAS 2023. Florence Italy. 173 (pp 113); Elsevier Ireland Ltd,

Abstract: Background: Many data underline the difficulty towards a complex health care approach in this menopausal phase that would allow adequate clinical and preventive framing in patients with intellectual disability (ID). The figure of the caregiver plays a key role in this phase of a woman's life because it is essential to inform and educate her about the characteristics of menopause-related changes and the period of onset. Aim(s): To address the issues of menopause in women with ID, outlining a structured health care pathway to ensure adequate responses capable of handling the issues expressed, reducing discomfort and creating homogeneous and appropriate pathways. Method(s): Within the framework of the PASS Pilot Project dedicated to equity of access to care for people with special needs related to disability, active since 2018 at the regional level, in 13 hospital and hospital-university deanships, we report the experience of the Careggi University Hospital (2018-2022) on a sample of 30 patients with ID within the total of 222 PASS services. Under our observation, patients and their caregivers approached the AOU Careggi PASS Presidium for issues related to perimenopause and cancer screening at this stage of life. For the purpose of need assessment, questionnaires were administered that significantly highlighted, the importance of a specific approach for patients and caregivers with dedicated staff and facilities. Conclusion(s): Considering the significant communication difficulties that there may be with women with ID, this analysis revealed the need for providers to have adequate training in the management of this type of patient and their caregivers, as provided for in the



training courses implemented in our regional PASS program, especially when we consider that there are currently a small number of educational programs on menopause specifically for the needs of women with ID. However, these data are based on pilot sample and need to be confirmed with a larger sample of patients. Copyright © 2023

Access or request full text: <https://libkey.io/10.1016/j.maturitas.2023.04.250>

[Back to top](#)

POSTER

Empowerment workshops to improve menopause care for people with intellectual disabilities

Author: Pape, S. E., Davies, J., Haddow-Mendez, S. and O'Mahoney-James, Z.

Publication Date: 2025

Abstract: Introduction: there has been a significant increase in information about the peri-menopause and menopause in the media spotlight. Many women learn they are peri-menopausal by reading about it or from talking to other women - this could be via work colleagues, their family or friendship groups. Women with intellectual disabilities have fewer opportunities to learn about menopause this could be due to communication difficulties, lack of access to easy read resources, social isolation, and being supported by younger people who do not have lived experiences. ...] Our project was designed to help educate and empower women with intellectual disabilities about the menopause to ensure they are able to understand and voice their experiences, seek help, and be offered appropriate screening and treatment. Method: pilot study consisting of three workshop streams developed for women with intellectual disabilities aged 35 and over, tailored to meet the needs of those with mild, moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. We ran 4-6 interactive workshops per group. Effectiveness and experiences were evaluated using pre-and-post comparisons based on participant completed questionnaires. Results: Improvements were seen in participants understanding of menopause; knowing what happens during the menopause; being more confident to ask for help; and having spoken to a health professional about the menopause. Women with milder intellectual disabilities were able to advocate for themselves and some made appointments with their GP to discuss menopause related issues.

URL: https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/events/2025-events/faculties/intellectual-disability/events---faculty-of-intellectual-disability-25---sarah-pape-24-poster.pdf?sfvrsn=eef8c808_3

[Back to top](#)

WEB PAGE

The Menopause Project

Author: McGinn, Informing Choices N. I. and Deborah

Publication Date: 2025

Abstract: The Menopause Project is an education and research project between Informing Choices and Ulster University. It is funded by The Ideas Fund in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. In the first part of the project our aim was to design an education programme for women with a learning disability; to be delivered in group settings and find out if it improved knowledge on menopause and, through feedback from participants, look at any changes needed to the programme. You can read the brief report of the research findings here, and the full report is available here. One of the recommendations from the report was for better training and support for staff and carers so that they have the skills and confidence to better inform and support people with learning disabilities around menopause. This will take place over the next year with completion by the end of June 2025. This is once



again funded by The Ideas Fund.

URL: <https://informingchoicesni.org/the-menopause-project>

[Back to top](#)



OFFICE USE ONLY

Keywords/search strategy	Limits used
<p>Menopause / perimenopause Hormone Replacement Therapy / HRT Hot flushes Climacteric</p> <p>Intellectual disabilities Learning disability Learning difficulties Development* disability Cognitive disability; Cognitive impairment</p> <p>Autis* Autism Spectrum Disorder /ASD Kanner’s syndrome Asperger’s syndrome Pervasive developmental disorder ADHD Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Hyperkinetic disorder Hyperkinetic syndrome Neurodiver* Down syndrome Trisomy (21) Mongolism Langdon syndrome Down’s disease</p>	<p>English Last 5 years</p>
AI prompts (if used)	
AI tool used: Copilot Researcher	
Date accessed: 30/04/2026	
<p>Prompts used:</p> <p>Hello, I am an evidence specialist work in a medical library. I am conducting an evidence search on menopause and perimenopause for women with intellectual disabilities or neurodiversity women (this includes, autistic, ADHD and down syndrome). I want to know how to measure, challenges and impact on dementia, mental health, well being, challenging behaviour, physical health. Also, any examples of good practice and more generally how what is the state of the research in this area. To do this, I would like to establish a list of all the synonyms associated to each key concepts. I have identified 2 main key concepts: menopause/perimenopause and intellectual disabilities and neurodiversity. Can you establish all synonyms for both key concepts, the associated MeSH terms for them and suggestions of complementary terms. Can you present this in a table.</p>	
AI tool used: Copilot Researcher	
Date accessed: 05/05/2026	
<p>Prompts used:</p> <p>Hello, I am an evidence specialist work in a medical library. I am conducting an evidence search on menopause and perimenopause for women with intellectual disabilities or neurodiversity women (this includes, autistic, ADHD and down syndrome). I want to know how to measure, challenges and impact on dementia, mental health, well being, challenging behaviour, physical</p>	



health. Also, any examples of good practice and more generally how what is the state of the research in this area. Give me peer-review articles and published the last 6 years in English.

AI tool used: Copilot Researcher

Date accessed: 08/05/2026

Prompts used:

from my previous request can you focus now on examples of good practices, specifically regarding the management of menopause or perimenopause for women with learning/intellectual disabilities or Down Syndrome or neurodiversity and look at service evaluations, quality improvement projects or pilot programmes in the UK, US, Australia, Canada and Europe. State your sources for each finding.

Databases/sources used

<input type="checkbox"/> Pubmed	<input type="checkbox"/> HMIC	<input type="checkbox"/> BMJ Best Practice
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MEDLINE	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Policy & Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Trip Pro/AskTrip
<input type="checkbox"/> Emcare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CINAHL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cochrane Library
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Embase	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PsycINFO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Copilot Researcher
<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge & Library Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> Google Advanced/Scholar	<input type="checkbox"/> Consensus

Other (please list):

inSPIRE repository



The Knowledge & Library Service have a growing archive of completed evidence summaries on [inSPIRE](#) – the organisation’s knowledge, research and evidence repository. You can browse the evidence summaries [here](#).

The (anonymised) results of this search will only be shared in the repository if you have given your permission to do so (we ask this in the evidence search request form).

Has permission to share these results been given?

Yes – share

No – do not share

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Improvement Team	Email: Jessica.Pawley@somersetft.nhs.uk Web: https://somersetcollaborationhub.org/
Primary Care/ICB	Email: Roxanne.hart3@nhs.net