Menopause in the workplace

Menopausal symptoms may have a negative impact on work and the ability to work, leading some women to exit employment or to reduce their working hours, which can have short- and long-term effects on income and security. EMAS therefore published global recommendations about menopause in the workplace, which are summarized below.

Recommendations for employers and organizations

Employers and organizations should:

- make health and wellbeing during the menopause a priority and ensure that staff are retained
- have a zero-tolerance policy on the bullying, harassment, victimization or belittling of women with menopause symptoms
- undertake an assessment of how work patterns may impact symptoms
- allow flexible working
- ensure menopause is included in training for all staff
- develop an employment framework that recognizes the potential impact of the menopause
- include explicit coverage of menopause in sickness and attendance management policies and ensure women can access workplace healthcare provision.

Recommendations for managers and supervisors

Managers and supervisors should:

- create an open, inclusive and supportive culture regarding the menopause
- ensure that human resource functions work with occupational health professionals
- allow flexibility in dress codes and allow for uniforms to use thermally comfortable fabrics
- review control over workplace temperature and ventilation and provide access to cold drinking water
- ensure access to clean and private changing and washing facilities and toilets
- allow breaks to manage symptoms such as severe hot flushes.

Women living with and beyond cancer experiencing menopausal symptoms should be encouraged to seek specialist advice.

Women with a premature menopause should be encouraged to seek specialist services.
Recommendations for healthcare and allied healthcare professionals
Healthcare and allied healthcare professionals (HCPs) should:
• recognize that menopausal symptoms can adversely affect working life
• provide evidence-based advice using national and international guidelines.

Occupational health professionals should:
• provide advice on how to manage menopause and work, and encourage women to consult their usual health provider if necessary.

Recommendations for women
Women should:
• talk to their line managers or supervisors if they experience menopause-related problems that impact on their ability to work
• seek help and advice from employee support or advocacy bodies and occupational health services, if necessary
• be aware of state-wide or national legislation and regulation that protects menopausal women at work
• consult their usual healthcare provider, if necessary
• access evidence-based guidelines for information on menopause care
• be involved in developing health and wellbeing policies in their workplace
• take part in induction, training and development programs that include coverage of menopause
• be involved in formal and informal support groups for women with menopausal symptoms.

There is a diversity of experience of menopause in the workplace, shaped by not only by menopausal symptoms but also the workplace environment.

Further information