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PECULIARITIES AND FACTORS OF THE MENOPAUSAL AGE OF BRAZILIAN WOMEN, COMPARED TO THE DATA OF LITHUANIAN POPULATION

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Objective. To investigate the age of menopause in Brazilian women, its characteristics and different factors, and to compare the latter data with the results of a similar study of Lithuanian women.

Methodology. A cross-sectional analytical study was performed in Brazil. A total of 139 Brazilian women (all older than 40 years) answered a questionnaire about their demographic, social, economic and biological factors, including information about their gynaecological and obstetric medical history. The age at last menstruation was determined by the Status Quo method using Probit analysis as well as the retrospective method by calculating the mean age at last period. Those who had a hysterectomy (10.7%) were excluded from this study. The data were compared with the results of the same study on the menopause age of Lithuanian women.

Results. The mean age of investigated Brazilian women was 54.5±7 years (min – 40 years old, max – 76 years old). The average height was 162.2±6.7 cm. The mean BMI was 27.2 kg/m2. The median age of menopause determined by Status Quo method was 46.86±5.26 years (95% Confidence Interval [39,53 – 48,94], p<0,01). A total of 17.2% of investigated Brazilian women still had their periods. The results differed around 2 years (48.6±6.6 years) when calculating the average age of last menstruation according only to the retrospective data.

The median menopause age determined by Status Quo method (using Probit analysis) of Lithuanian women was 49.58±4.4 years and 36% of investigated Lithuanian women claimed to still experience their menstrual cycles.

Significant results were seen when analysing specific factors that are thought to influence menopause age or perception of symptoms, specifically education, BMI, smoking, physical activity.

Conclusions. 1. The average age of menopause in Brazilian women was 46.86±5.26 years by the Status Quo method, but almost two years later (48.6±6.6 years) by the retrospective method, indicating a recent trend toward earlier menopause in Brazilian females. 2. The menopause in Brazilian women occurred 2,72 years earlier than in Lithuanian women (p<0,001).

Discussion. It is still to be understood how specific factors influence the way women perceive menopause in distinct populations. It is not simple to compare menopausal influencing factors equally across the world, especially because we are living in a highly globalized Era where women might experience the same level of stress despite their different geographical region. There is limited data comparing these factors, especially between Brazilian and Lithuanian women, probably because of the enormous economic, environmental, and cultural differences between these two countries which restrict the accuracy of the data collection.

Keywords. Menopause; socioeconomic factors; biological factors; Brazil; Lithuania.