

Thesis Title	Menopausal Symptoms and Health Practices among Middle Aged Thai Muslim Women
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### **Abstract**

This descriptive research examines menopausal symptoms and health practices among 366 middle aged Thai Muslim women, living in Amphur Chana, Songkla province. 4 districts out of 16 districts were selected by simple random sampling and the number of subjects was determined based on the proportion of population in the districts. The subjects were recruited by convenient sampling. Interview forms were used to collect demographic, health history, menstrual history, menopausal symptoms, and health practices.

The SPSS program was used to establish the frequency, mean, standard deviation, range and skewness. Independent sample t-test, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient were also used to analyze the data.

The results showed that the top ten menopausal symptoms reported as "often & almost always" in the subjects included back pain (22.7%), loss of feeling in hands and feet (18.0%), early morning awakening (13.2%), difficulty falling asleep (12.3%), weight gain (12.3%), irritability (12.3), hot flushes (11.8%), numbness and tingling (11.8%), headache (11.8%) and ache in the back of neck and skull (11.8%). Eight out of the top ten symptoms reported as the most frequent were also reported as the most severe.

Pre-perimenopausal subjects had a higher menopausal symptoms frequency mean score with regard to overall symptoms, general- somatic, vaso- somatic and psychological symptoms as compared to the postmenopausal group. In terms of severity, higher mean severity scores on overall symptoms, general-somatic and vaso-somatic symptoms were found in the pre-perimenopausal subjects but the psychological severity mean score between the two groups was not different.

Overall the health practices of the subjects were fair. The practices regarding exercise and general responsibility for health were particularly poor. More than 60% of the subjects did not exercise regularly, 76.8% did not do Pap smear annually, 35% did not do breasts self examination, and more than 50% of the subjects did not drink milk or soybean milk.

The overall health practices score of the two groups was not different ( $p > 0.05$ ) but pre-perimenopausal subjects had significantly higher elimination practices, stress management, and general responsibility for health mean scores than postmenopausal subjects. In addition, there was a negative relationship of menopausal frequency, and menopausal severity with health practices ( $p < 0.01$ )  $r = -.297, -.174$ , respectively.

The finding suggests that menopausal symptoms among these middle aged Muslim women were not as prevalent and severe as other middle aged women. Higher frequency symptoms mean score in pre-perimenopausal subjects support the notion that during this transition women undergo the gradually decline of hormones accompanied by the symptoms of varying intensity and duration. In postmenopause, when estrogen hormone is low but stable, the experiences of symptoms of symptoms lower than pre-perimenopausal subjects.