

Women, menopause and work: the importance of a healthy lifestyle

T.P. Baccolo * 1, M.R. Marchetti 1, A.Pera 1

1 Italian Worker's Compensation Authority (INAIL)

MENOPAUSE AND WORK In Italy the employment of women has undergone a significant increase in recent years, women's retirement age of civil servants has been raised from 60 to 65 years, thus raising their time at work, and an increasing number of them spend about a third of their lives in conditions of post-menopausal.

The presence of working women in menopause may lead to increased sickness absence with repercussions on the work and productivity. They have, also, more fractures after tumbles and an increase of dislocations and contusions to upper and lower limbs at work. More over cognitive and memorization abilities deteriorate and often they manifest depression, irritability and more.

MENOPAUSE AND HEALTH The first cause of death among women in menopause (between 45 and 55 years age) are the diseases of the cardiovascular system and the major risk factors associated with premature death (before age 65) are tobacco smoking, excessive alcohol intake, unbalanced diet and lack of physical activity.

Abatement of tobacco smoke, an healthy diet and a regular physical exercise can contribute to mitigate climacteric disorders and to prevent or to cure their associated pathologies.

MENOPAUSE AND SMOKE

To quit smoking reduces the risk of cardiovascular pathologies

MENOPAUSE AND DIET

Proper and balanced nutrition can effectively contributes to mitigate menopause symptoms and to prevent and treat associated diseases. In postmenopausal women the diet should be rich in fruits and vegetables (5 portions a day) with a generous daily consumption of water (6-8 glasses a day). The diet, if necessary, can be supplemented with calcium, omega 3 and folic acid.

MENOPAUSE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular aerobic physical activity increases physical and mental well-being of women, also in menopause, especially if associated with the elimination of tobacco smoke. Physical activity:

- ✓ protects the circulatory system;
- ✓ lowers blood levels of LDL ("bad" cholesterol);
- ✓ increases blood levels of HDL ("good" cholesterol);
- ✓ reduces triglycerides;
- reduces blood pressure;
- ✓ contributes to the maintenance of ideal body weight;
- ✓ prevents and delays osteoporosis;
- ✓ improves muscle tone and reflexes, improving balance and reducing the risk of falls;
- ✓ improves mood;
- ✓ reduces the frequency of vasomotor disturbances (hot flushes and sweats).

REFERENCES

- •http://www.salute.gov.it/saluteDonna/paginaMenuSaluteDonna.jsp?menu=statosalute&lingua=italiano
- •http://www.inran.it/648/linee_guida.html
- •Sasser AC, Rousculp MD, Birnbaum HG, Oster EF, Lufkin E, Mallet D. Economic burden of osteoporosis, breast cancer, and cardiovascular disease among postmenopausal women in an employed population. Womens Health Issues. 2005 May-Jun;15(3):97-108
- •INAIL. Dati Andamento degli infortuni sul lavoro. Mestiere Donna. [online].[consultato agosto 2011]. Febbraio 2008. URL: http://www.inail.it/repository/ContentManagement/node/N670420288/Bozza2%20DATI%20INAIL%20N2%202008.pdf





Leaflet made by INAIL titled "Healthy lifestyle for working women in menopause" that shows the health and economic benefits of correct diet, physical activity and no smoking habit. It was hand out in Italian Companies



HEALTH PROMOTION IN WORKPLACE

Health promotion programs carried out in the workplace, aimed at women of all ages, help to raise awareness about specific issues related to menopause, and give the possiblity to develop a counselling by Occupational Physicians and other specialists called by Companies (cardiologists, physiatrists, nutritionists, psychologists, ..) as preventive measures. Companies can also offer to smokers women individual and/or collective special courses (carried out by Specialists) aimed at helping them to quit tobacco smoke. Work canteens and food and drink dispensers have to contain fresh fruits and vegetables. Companies can arrange for exercises of women in special hall of workplace or in a gym near workplace