

N. Kokras¹, K. Stamatelopoulos², I. Zervas¹, G.N. Papadimitriou¹, I. Lambrinouadaki³

¹First Department of Psychiatry, Medical School University of Athens, Athens, Greece ; ²Department of Therapeutics, Medical School University of Athens, Athens, Greece ; ³Second Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Medical School University of Athens, Athens, Greece

Introduction

Recently there is growing interest with regards to personality and character traits that may have an effect on the incidence and severity of climacteric symptoms. Neuroticism emerges as one important factor according to the Big-Five and Eysenck's models, but little is known about the possible relationship of menopausal symptoms and Cloninger's model of personality.

Aims & Objectives

The present study aimed to explore the relationship between Cloninger's model of personality and the severity of climacteric symptoms. Specifically, this study investigated whether certain temperament and personality traits associate with either psychological, somatic or vasomotor distress symptoms in menopause.

Methods

One-hundred-seventy menopausal women from a Greek University menopause clinic completed Cloninger's Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI-140) which measures four dimensions of temperament: Harm Avoidance (HA), Novelty Seeking, Reward Dependence and Persistence, as well as three dimensions of character: Self-directedness (SD), Cooperativeness, and Self-Transcendence. Menopausal somatic, vasomotor and psychological symptoms were assessed using the Greene Climacteric Scale.

Results

Higher HA emerged as the most significant temperament trait influencing anxiety and depressive symptoms. Lower SD resulted in more depressive climacteric symptoms. A multivariate regression model further showed that higher HA and lower SD independently associated with more depressive symptoms, whereas years since menopause, body mass index and waist-to-hip ratio influenced somatic and vasomotor symptoms only.

Conclusions

Our findings indicate that high HA and low SD associate to psychological climacteric distress symptoms, while somatic and vasomotor symptoms are independent of character or temperament traits and mainly influenced by menopausal age and body mass index.