

National

Organization of

Mothers

Of

Twins

Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT:

MENOPAUSE

RESEARCHER:

NOMOTC

DATE:

December 1994 - May 1995

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to help answer the question, "Does having multiples affect the menopause?"

METHOD: The questionnaire was printed in *MOTC's Notebook* and a National Mailing. This survey was to be filled out by mothers of multiples who had experienced menopause or were experiencing menopausal symptoms.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Menopause is the time in a woman's life when her ovaries stop producing estrogen and her menstrual periods stop. Menopausal symptoms include "hot flashes" and extreme vaginal dryness, among others.

This survey was completed by 52 mothers of multiples. The mothers' ages ranged from under 35 to over 71, with the majority being between the ages of 56-65 years of age. The multiple types were: 4 identical boys; 8 identical girls; 16 boy/girl; 11 fraternal boys; 12 fraternal girls; and 1 set of triplets. Two mothers had more than one set of multiples.

RESULTS:

1. 87% of the MOMs (mothers of multiples) were 30-39 years old at the time of the multiple birth. 21% were 20-29 years old at the time of their first pregnancy; and the rest of the MOMs were 30-39 years old then. 15% of the MOMs were over 40 at the time of their last pregnancy, and the rest were 30-39 years old during their last pregnancy. 15 of the women had two pregnancies; 16 had three; and 3 had four.
2. Their own mother was 34 years old or younger at the time of her first pregnancy (68% were age 20-29). 68% of their moms were age 25-34 at the time of her last pregnancy. 12% of their moms had also had multiples.
3. The age of menarche (when menstrual cycles began) was: 9 yrs. or younger (6%); 10-11 yrs. (40%); 12-13 yrs. (44%); and 14-15 (10%).
4. 37% of the mothers of multiples began experiencing menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes, between the ages of 49-54; 33% said this began at age 37-42; and another 33% said it began at age 43-48.
5. The majority (51%) said they reached menopause at age 61 or older; 27% were 55-60 years old; and 18% were 43-48 years old. Two people reached menopause between ages of 37-42.
6. Their own mother's age at the time of menopause was: 49-54 years of age (only six responses) and 55-60 years of age (only 12 responses). Most people left this question blank.
7. When asked at what age their sister went through menopause, 9 out of 13 respondents said ages 49-54. Three of the sisters also had multiples.

8. Seven mothers of multiples had taken fertility drugs, mainly Clomid and Pergonal, at some time in their life.
9. Six mothers of multiples began menopause as a result of medical treatment, and 18 began menopause as a result of surgery.
10. 40% said that menopause was difficult some of the time; 19% said it was difficult all of the time; 31% said it was difficult rarely; and 10% said it wasn't difficult at all.
11. Most of the women had experienced some type of side effects from menopause, mainly headaches (88%); loss of libido (85%); hot flashes (77%); mood swings (60%); flushing (19%); and painful intercourse (12%).
12. Only five respondents said that their symptoms were similar to their sister's; 14 said their symptoms were similar to their mother's menopausal symptoms.
13. Only 27% of the MOMs had taken Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). Of those who took it, only two began the HRT at the beginning of menopause. The most common medications taken were oral Estrogen and Estrogen cream. 85% said their doctor has recommended they take HRT. Three of their mothers and three of their sisters also took HRT. Seven of the MOMs no longer took HRT.
14. 77% said they felt minimally prepared for menopause, and 17% said they were adequately prepared. Only 3 MOMs felt very prepared for menopause.
15. None of the MOMs felt that having multiples affected their menopause.

CONCLUSION:

1. The mothers of multiples participating in this study had their children much later in life than their mothers did.
2. Very few of these women took Hormone Replacement Therapy. Of those who did take HRT many didn't start taking medication until years after the onset of menopause. Medical studies show that the most bone loss occurs right after the onset of menopause, and this bone loss is irreversible. Besides the benefit of preventing osteoporosis, the major benefit of taking HRT is prevention of heart disease, which remains the #1 killer of Americans.
3. Since the average age at menopause (per scientific textbooks) is 58, over half of these mothers of multiples went into menopause at a later age than the average female population (51% were 61 or older when they went into menopause, and 27% experienced it between the ages of 55-60). The MOMs in this study also went into menopause at a later age than their mothers and sisters. Therefore, it appears that having multiples MAY have an effect on delaying the menopause.