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Government Social Research Profession

Research and analysis

Menopause in the Workplace Literature Review

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Executive summary

This report outlines the findings of literature review on menopause in the workplace, undertaken by the Department of Work and Pensions. The aim was to review the evidence on what works to support women in the workplace.

1. What is the impact of menopause on women in relation to work and employment?
2. What support is offered by employers and how effective is it?
3. What is the cost to the UK economy of women's experiences of menopause in the workplace?
4. What are the evidence gaps and recommendations for future research?

The research builds on a previous comprehensive review conducted in 2016 (Brewer et al 2016) and updates the evidence base with research from 2016 to 2024. The review has been carried out in line with the Government Statistical Service (GSS) rapid review guidance. It has considered most appropriate for UK employers, although a secondary search of international research was also undertaken to ensure no key evidence was missed. The publications and their quality of evidence were included in the review.

The review found considerable evidence that some women going through menopause experience symptoms which can impact their ability to work and their work life, and to a lesser extent, their ability to effectively do their jobs. Few studies report positive or neutral experiences of menopause at work. The impact on work and employment most commonly cited relates to the degree to which any symptoms experienced affect women's ability to work, including their productivity, effective social and cultural circumstances surrounding the menopause in the workplace.

Women who experience menopause symptoms and menopause transition may be more likely entertain negative stereotypes of older women as less able and the menopause as a time of decline. Research with employers and managers also highlight that work may have been at expense of the menopause, in particular reverse causal direction.

Overall, there is a paucity of evidence of the extent and scope of support offered by employers. Small case studies from a range of sectors suggest that employer support is mixed and ad hoc. Some employers have taken steps to raise awareness of menopause, feel relevant to such support in the workplace, and a few have taken interventions (most frequently changed flexible working) to the workplace.

The cost to the economy of women's experiences of menopause is unclear. The cost in-depth of these estimated the cost to UK economy of women's experiences of menopause in 2024 dollar (£) comprehensive and a further £700 million due to absenteeism and £2.4 million due to presenteeism.

Based on these findings, there are a number of recommendations for future research in relation to women's experiences of menopause in the workplace, including: intervention studies, cross-sectional research with diverse samples, research which includes more objective measures of women's menopause status and symptoms, research which includes more objective measures of women's menopause status and symptoms, including the potential negative consequences of any intervention, and a qualitative estimate the financial cost attributed to women's experiences of menopause.

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank our colleagues in the DWP library for their assistance in finding the relevant literature and the many hours and forth conversations that it involved.

We would also like to thank members of the Expert Advisory Group for their contributions to the review: Professor Dame Carol C.C. Brewer (Professor Emeritus and Safety Executive), Mary Lynch (Dwyer Consulting), Tatiana Bracarel (University of Reading), and Dr Lynne Hall (Sheffield Hallam University).

Thank you also to Chris Brown, Nikki Gallagher, and Zoe Greer for advice and support.

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Summary

With the increase in women participating in the labour market, more women are experiencing menopause while in employment. Understanding the impact of the menopause in the workplace is therefore of growing importance. Policy proposals by employers in the UK have focused on the need for more flexible support from employers to protect female workforce. Focus on how such support could be provided through menopause and there is a commitment in the Plan to Make Work Pay (2016) to review the evidence on what works to support women in the workplace during menopause. Such support, can contribute to the current government's ambitious goals of reaching an employment rate of 80%, by helping women experiencing menopause to remain in employment or reduce the barriers to re-entering the labour market.

To help inform policy work in this area, this report outlines the findings of a literature review on the impact of menopause on women in relation to work and the support offered by employers to address the following questions:

1. What is the impact of menopause on women in relation to work and employment?
2. What support is offered by employers and how effective is it?
3. What is the cost to the UK economy women's experiences of menopause in the workplace?
4. What are the evidence gaps and recommendations for future research?

This literature review builds upon a similar review conducted by Brewer et al (2016). Breaks at included research from the end of March 2016 to 31st March 2024 to ensure evidence produced after that and up until October 2024. Only literature produced in the UK was included in the review, but a secondary search of international research was undertaken to ensure no key evidence was missed. The publications and their quality of evidence were included in the review. Studies were assessed for their quality of evidence. Studies were included if they were deemed to be of high quality, or if they were the only evidence on a topic. In total, 42 publications were found to be relevant to the review.

Key Findings:

- there is considerable evidence that some women going through menopause experience symptoms which can impact their confidence and well being at work and their ability to effectively do their jobs. Few studies report positive or neutral experiences of menopause at work.
- Two studies report positive or negative experiences of menopause at work although there is evidence that some women find positive aspects when experiencing menopause. Research with employers and managers also cover these experiences.
- studies highlight how work conditions and environment, for example the requirement to wear a uniform or the amount of control over a work environment can impact on experiences of menopause, i.e. a potential reverse causal direction or at least interaction effect.
- the experiences of menopause vary and women who have suffered from ill health or disability, for example financial position or age, sex, and underlying health conditions may be more affected by the menopause. Research with employers also show directly attributed to menopause is difficult to tease out and those experiencing menopause.
- there is a relationship between menopause symptoms and women's engagement in employment. Women with some symptoms reported negative consequences on their ability to remain in employment and engagement in work, and increased absenteeism and presenteeism. Research with employers also cover this.
- there is evidence to suggest that social and cultural circumstances surrounding menopause impacts on women's engagement in work, with gendered ageist thinking and stereotypes of older women as less able and the menopause as a time of decline. Research with employers also cover this.
- studies highlight how work conditions and environment, for example the requirement to wear a uniform or the amount of control over a work environment can impact on experiences of menopause, i.e. a potential reverse causal direction or at least interaction effect.
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- there is evidence of a relationship between menopause symptoms and women's engagement in employment. Women with some symptoms reported negative consequences on their ability to remain in employment and engagement in work, and increased absenteeism and presenteeism. Research with employers also cover this.
- there is evidence to suggest that social and cultural circumstances surrounding menopause impacts on women's engagement in work, with gendered ageist thinking and stereotypes of older women as less able and the menopause as a time of decline.
- overall, there is a paucity of evidence of the extent and scope of support offered by employers. What evidence there is suggests disparate and uneven support.
- many women report that they would like more workplace support in the form of information on menopause and adjustments according to their needs. Research with employers also cover this. Research with employers also cover this.
- support offered by employers includes information and signposts to other sources.
- high quality research on the efficacy of interventions to support women experiencing menopause in the workplace is lacking.
- only two studies provide information on financial cost to the UK economy. The most in-depth of these estimated the annual cost to the economy to be approximately £5.3 million due to absenteeism and further £700 million due to absenteeism and £2.4 million due to presenteeism.
- the literature review highlights several evidence gaps and recommendations for future research, including:
  - longitudinal research, both qualitative and quantitative
  - intervention studies, including those with a focus on both medical or positive experiences of menopause in the workplace
  - intersectional research with diverse samples
  - Research which includes more objective measures of women's menopause status and symptoms
  - research which includes the extent and forms of support offered by employers
  - Research on women who have suffered from ill health or disability and how to support employment while going through menopause
  - intervention studies, including the potential negative consequences of any intervention
  - research to estimate the financial cost attributed to women's experiences of menopause

1. Introduction

Background

Women over 50s make up a significant percentage of the labour market, and this proportion is expected to rise. In the UK, 2016, there were about 6.5 million women aged between 50 and 64 years, and this is projected to increase to 7.1 million by 2026 (Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, 2016). Menopause normally affects women between the ages of 45 and 55 years, and the average age of menopause in the UK is 51 (Kling et al 2015). Although some women are affected by menopause in their 40s. As more women are experiencing menopause while in employment, understanding the impact of menopause in the workplace has become more important.

There is increasing acknowledgement of the growing importance of this area, as evidenced by the Plan to Make Work Pay (2016) which includes a commitment to review policy, to advocate good practice, disseminate organisations and tackle stigma (Kling et al 2016). However, it is not clear how widely this guidance is followed or implemented (Brewer et al 2016).

Menopause in the UK Discussion Paper, Women's Health and Equality Rights Bill, does require large employers to produce Menopause Action Plans on how they will support women experiencing menopause. In addition, Trade Union Congress (TUC) has called for Menopause Leave, which would provide women with paid leave to cope with the effects through menopause.

Menopause is not an equation, within the Self-Employed Working (2016) White Paper, to reach an 80% employment rate within the UK. This White Paper identified barriers to employment for the self-employed, including ill health and caring responsibility, but also long-term sickness, presenteeism, poor management, pay and lack of education, employment in training, and women with caring responsibilities. Supporting women through the menopause in the workplace could be a potential way to help contribute to the achieving the 80% employment rate which can contribute to growth from reducing the numbers of people who fall out of employment and preventing them from re-entering the labour market.

An evidence review by Brewer and colleagues, entitled 'The effects of menopause on women's health and employment' (Department for Work and Pensions, 2016), was published in Spring 2016 and updated in 2017. This research contained 150 studies from the end of March 2016, including only English language literature. The topics covered included: the prevalence of menopause, the impact of menopause on women in the workplace and in the wider labour market, the impact of menopause on the attitudes of employers/managers on women's economic participation, how women experiencing menopause can be supported in the workplace, the cost to the economy of women's experiences of menopause, and identifying evidence gaps.

The report concluded that the evidence identified many negative effects of menopause on women's health and well being, and that it was clear that some women experience difficulty during menopause and that this can affect women's work, and that women could not understand or provided for in the workplace or in policies. However, it was highlighted that there was little evidence on what works to support women in the workplace during symptoms and circumstances in the definition of they facts, such as menopausal symptoms.

Key findings from the review were:

1. working women experience menopause differently with a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms. These symptoms can interfere with their ability to work effectively.
2. there is evidence to suggest that these symptoms have a negative impact on women's economic participation and work performance.
3. menopause is poorly understood and not well provided for in workplace cultures, policies and practices.
4. working women experience ageist stereotypes and discrimination in relation to menopause.
5. interventions to support women experiencing menopause at work need to account for the wide range of symptoms. Interventions may be more or less effective for intersectional groups (e.g. Black or Asian women).
6. the cost to the economy of women's experiences of work and positive aspects and areas need to be considered.

The report also highlighted several gaps in the evidence base, which included:

- few studies of qualitative interventions, no studies of positive or intersectional experience and economic participation.
- no research on difficulties in finding work or on wages, few studies on transition or in relation to continuing employment
- no research on the impact on women's CV or lost pay and
- no studies comprehensively quantifying the economic costs of menopause
- few studies where work menopause are the prominent focus of the research

The current review was commissioned to build upon the work of Brewer et al, to update the latest evidence produced in the eight years since that report and to see whether the gaps in evidence identified in the review have been addressed. The aim of the report, this literature review, was to review the evidence on what works to support women experiencing menopause in the workplace, and to ensure a paucity of UK evidence was identified.

This literature review aims to understand what the evidence base is on what works to support women experiencing menopause, including in the contemporary phase. As many women are working longer than previously, and the state pension age is increasing, this research focuses on women in employment. This research also uses the term 'menopause' referring to any stage of menopause in which women may experience physiological symptoms. These stages are defined below.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of menopause on women in relation to work and employment?
2. What menopause symptoms are women experiencing in the workplace and how is this impacting them?
3. How does the experience of menopause symptoms at work vary across the population of female workers, by factors such as age, occupation, sector, salary and ethnicity? Do women who have suffered from ill health or disability report more or less experiences of menopause symptoms at work?
4. In what ways does the experience of menopause symptoms influence women's economic participation, including their ability to find work, their ability to remain around progress and promotional opportunities or staying out of the workplace?
5. What support is offered by employers and how effective is it?
6. What support, if any, do employers think should be offered to women experiencing menopausal symptoms, and how does this vary by occupation, sector, size of organisation and so on?
7. How well supported do workers feel by their employer? What is identified as helpful and why?
8. How effective is support such as other interventions of improving staff wellbeing, productivity and reducing staff turnover?
9. Are there any unintended consequences of the provided support?
10. What are the costs and benefits of providing the support?
11. What is the cost to the UK economy women's experiences of menopause in the workplace?
12. What percentage of working women are likely to reduce employment hours and/or leave the labour market as their experience of menopause?
13. What is the estimated sickness absence for women experiencing menopause?
14. What is the estimated presenteeism cost of this issue?
15. Evidence gaps and recommendations.
16. What are the evidence gaps relating to menopause and the workplace and/or labour market? What are the recommendations for addressing these gaps?

2. Methodology

The publications for this review were identified by the DWP Library team, based on search terms and search strategies provided by the research team. Terms used were 'menopause', 'educational', 'economic', 'psychological', 'physiological', and 'temporary', 'temporary', 'climacteric' and 'premenopause', using all relevant synonyms and variations. The search was limited to English language, and to UK and building the protocol review. A scoping review of secondary literature and reviews and consultation with subject experts revealed no new relevant terms to add to this list.

Only research published between April 2016 and October 2024 in English was included in the review. Research published before April 2016 was included in Brewer et al (2016), primarily UK evidence. This review was taken in accordance with Government's cultural diversity in experiences of menopause (Brewer et al, 2017) and because UK evidence is more relevant to UK policy. However, a secondary search of international research was also carried out of the literature review and research, to ensure no key evidence was missed. The search was limited to English language, and to UK and building the protocol review. A scoping review of secondary literature and reviews and consultation with subject experts revealed no new relevant terms to add to this list.

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The EBSCO Discovery Service was used for the literature searches. 55 databases as well as Google Scholar were searched, including Medline, Cochrane Library, Web of Science, Wiley Online Library. Research assessment was considered from the outset, a priority being placed on peer-reviewed literature. Grey literature was included if we considered it to be of high quality, or if it was the only evidence on a topic. Research quality assessments were identified through Critical Appraisal Skills Programme checklists. In this stage of the search, all which were included. In the second round of searching, the research quality assessment was used to decide which studies were included. We did not contain secondary research or systematic reviews. The initial search consisted of robust research and if they provided only background information on the topic, they were not included.

We used a Framework approach to analysis (Ritchie and Spencer 1994; Ritchie et al 2003). In the first stage, we created a table, in Microsoft Excel, the data extraction from the research studies. We used the table to identify the research questions, extracted relevant data, and to make the data publications. This required some adjustments and refinements to our table headings.

Studies relevant to our research questions were added into the table, as well as details of the methods and quality of the studies. Team members checked one another's work to ensure consistency in the data extraction. The table was then reviewed and we identified the findings according to the broad research questions, and also to identify common themes, which were again cross-checked amongst team members.

Summary of included studies

Most publications in the review (now in UK based data only. We exceptions to this are Brewer et al (2016) and Kling et al (2015) and Brewer et al (2017) which are secondary research. Details. 19 of the publications are concerned with the impact of menopause on women in the workplace, how they deal with symptoms and how employers and managers deal with the issue. Four studies focus on the impact of menopause mostly women aged 45 and in early stages of menopause. Three studies focus on women's experiences of menopause and work, and three studies focus on women's experiences, the focus on women working in frontline positions such as the police service or the military. Two studies focus on the impact of menopause on women's CV and lost pay and difficulties in supporting women experiences of work between manual and non-manual jobs (e.g. Ivanof and Pocuatty, 2016). One study includes data from or about trans men and non-binary people (Ussher et al, 2020). Two studies focus on the impact of menopause on women's ability to remain in work, women. Studies gave information about ethnicity, most reported that the majority of participants were white. Therefore, there is a lack of ethnic diversity in the evidence base.

The publications used a variety of methods. Most rely on self-reports of experiences and perceptions of the impact of menopause on women's experiences of work, such as surveys, interviews and focus groups. Nine literature / systematic reviews are included. Five review did not contain interventions (Hickey et al 2017) and focused on women's experiences of menopause and work. Four studies were identified through Critical Appraisal Skills Programme checklists. Six publications were reviewed in this stage of the search, of which two were included. In the second round of searching, the research quality assessment was used to decide which studies were included. We did not contain secondary research or systematic reviews. The initial search consisted of robust research and if they provided only background information on the topic, they were not included.

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3. Findings

3.1. The impact of menopause on women in relation to work and employment

The studies report on a range of symptoms and how they impact on women's experiences of work. Studies report that women experiencing menopause can also group through menopause experiences and symptoms which can impact their confidence and well being at work and their ability to effectively do their jobs. Few studies report positive or neutral experiences of menopause at work. Two studies report positive or negative experiences of menopause at work although there is evidence that some women find positive aspects when experiencing menopause. Research with employers and managers also cover these experiences.

Studies highlight how work conditions and environment, for example the requirement to wear a uniform or the amount of control over a work environment can impact on experiences of menopause, i.e. a potential reverse causal direction or at least interaction effect.

The experiences of menopause vary and women who have suffered from ill health or disability, for example financial position or age, sex, and underlying health conditions may be more affected by the menopause. Research with employers also show directly attributed to menopause is difficult to tease out and those experiencing menopause.

There is evidence of a relationship between menopause symptoms and women's engagement in employment. Women with some symptoms reported negative consequences on their ability to remain in employment and engagement in work, and increased absenteeism and presenteeism. Research with employers also cover this.

There is evidence to suggest that social and cultural circumstances surrounding menopause impacts on women's engagement in work, with gendered ageist thinking and stereotypes of older women as less able and the menopause as a time of decline.

Overall, there is a paucity of evidence of the extent and scope of support offered by employers. What evidence there is suggests disparate and uneven support.

Many women report that they would like more workplace support in the form of information on menopause and adjustments according to their needs. Research with employers also cover this. Research with employers also cover this.

Support offered by employers includes information and signposts to other sources.

High quality research on the efficacy of interventions to support women experiencing menopause in the workplace is lacking.

Only two studies provide information on financial cost to the UK economy. The most in-depth of these estimated the annual cost to the economy to be approximately £5.3 million due to absenteeism and further £700 million due to absenteeism and £2.4 million due to presenteeism.

The literature review highlights several evidence gaps and recommendations for future research, including:

- longitudinal research, both qualitative and quantitative
- intervention studies, including those with a focus on both medical or positive experiences of menopause in the workplace
- intersectional research with diverse samples
- Research which includes more objective measures of women's menopause status and symptoms
- research which includes the extent and forms of support offered by employers
- Research on women who have suffered from ill health or disability and how to support employment while going through menopause
- intervention studies, including the potential negative consequences of any intervention
- research to estimate the financial cost attributed to women's experiences of menopause

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of menopause on women in relation to work and employment?
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6. Findings

6.1. The impact of menopause on women in relation to work and employment

The studies report on a range of symptoms and how they impact on women's experiences of work. Studies report that women experiencing menopause can also group through menopause experiences and symptoms which can impact their confidence and well being at work and their ability to effectively do their jobs. Few studies report positive or neutral experiences of menopause at work. Two studies report positive or negative experiences of menopause at work although there is evidence that some women find positive aspects when experiencing menopause. Research with employers and managers also cover these experiences.

Studies highlight how work conditions and environment, for example the requirement to wear a uniform or the amount of control over a work environment can impact on experiences of menopause, i.e. a potential reverse causal direction or at least interaction effect.

The experiences of menopause vary and women who have suffered from ill health or disability, for example financial position or age, sex, and underlying health conditions may be more affected by the menopause. Research with employers also show directly attributed to menopause is difficult to tease out and those experiencing menopause.

There is evidence of a relationship between menopause symptoms and women's engagement in employment. Women with some symptoms reported negative consequences on their ability to remain in employment and engagement in work, and increased absenteeism and presenteeism. Research with employers also cover this.

There is evidence to suggest that social and cultural circumstances surrounding menopause impacts on women's engagement in work, with gendered ageist thinking and stereotypes of older women as less able and the menopause as a time of decline.

Overall, there is a paucity of evidence of the extent and scope of support offered by employers. What evidence there is suggests disparate and uneven support.

Many women report that they would like more workplace support in the form of information on menopause and adjustments according to their needs. Research with employers also cover this. Research with employers also cover this.

Support offered by employers includes information and signposts to other sources.

High quality research on the efficacy of interventions to support women experiencing menopause in the workplace is lacking.

Only two studies provide information on financial cost to the UK economy. The most in-depth of these estimated the annual cost to the economy to be approximately £5.3 million due to absenteeism and further £700 million due to absenteeism and £2.4 million due to presenteeism.

The literature review highlights several evidence gaps and recommendations for future research, including:

- longitudinal research, both qualitative and quantitative
- intervention studies, including those with a focus on both medical or positive experiences of menopause in the workplace
- intersectional research with diverse samples
- Research which includes more objective measures of women's menopause status and symptoms
- research which includes the extent and forms of support offered by employers
- Research on women who have suffered from ill health or disability and how to support employment while going through menopause
- intervention studies, including the potential negative consequences of any intervention
- research to estimate the financial cost attributed to women's experiences of menopause

7. Introduction

Background

Women over 50s make up a significant percentage of the labour market, and this proportion is expected to rise. In the UK, 2016, there were about 6.5 million women aged between 50 and 64 years, and this is projected to increase to 7.1 million by 2026 (Office for National Statistics, Annual Population Survey, 2016). Menopause normally affects women between the ages of 45 and 55 years, and the average age of menopause in the UK is 51 (Kling et al 2015). Although some women are affected by menopause in their 40s. As more women are experiencing menopause while in employment, understanding the impact of menopause in the workplace has become more important.

There is increasing acknowledgement of the growing importance of this area, as evidenced by the Plan to Make Work Pay (2016) which includes a commitment to review policy, to advocate good practice, disseminate organisations and tackle stigma (Kling et al 2016). However, it is not clear how widely this guidance is followed or implemented (Brewer et al 2016).

Menopause in the UK Discussion Paper, Women's Health and Equality Rights Bill, does require large employers to produce Menopause Action Plans on how they will support women experiencing menopause. In addition, Trade Union Congress (TUC) has called for Menopause Leave, which would provide women with paid leave to cope with the effects through menopause.

Menopause is not an equation, within the Self-Employed Working (2016) White Paper, to reach an 80% employment rate within the UK. This White Paper identified barriers to employment for the self-employed, including ill health and caring responsibility, but also long-term sickness, presenteeism, poor management, pay and lack of education, employment in training, and women with caring responsibilities. Supporting women through the menopause in the workplace could be a potential way to help contribute to the achieving the 80% employment rate which can contribute to growth from reducing the numbers of people who fall out of employment and preventing them from re-entering the labour market.

An evidence review by Brewer and colleagues, entitled 'The effects of menopause on women's health and employment' (Department for Work and Pensions, 2016), was published in Spring 2016 and updated in 2017. This research contained 150 studies from the end of March 2016, including only English language literature. The topics covered included: the prevalence of menopause, the impact of menopause on women in the workplace and in the wider labour market, the impact of menopause on the attitudes of employers/managers on women's economic participation, how women experiencing menopause can be supported in the workplace, the cost to the economy of women's experiences of menopause, and identifying evidence gaps.

The report concluded that the evidence identified many negative effects of menopause on women's health and well being, and that it was clear that some women experiences difficulty during menopause and that this can affect women's work, and that women could not understand or provided for in the workplace or in policies. However, it was highlighted that there was little evidence on what works to support women in the workplace during symptoms and circumstances in the definition of they facts, such as menopausal symptoms.

Key findings from the review were:

1. working women experience menopause differently with a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms. These symptoms can interfere with their ability to work effectively.
2. there is evidence to suggest that these symptoms have a negative impact on women's economic participation and work performance.
3. menopause is poorly understood and not well provided for in workplace cultures, policies and practices.
4. working women experience ageist stereotypes and discrimination in relation to menopause.
5. interventions to support women experiencing menopause at work need to account for the wide range of symptoms. Interventions may be more or less effective for intersectional groups (e.g. Black or Asian women).
6. the cost to the economy of women's experiences of work and positive aspects and areas need to be considered.

The report also highlighted several gaps in the evidence base, which included:

- few studies of qualitative interventions, no studies of positive or intersectional experience and economic participation.
- no research on difficulties in finding work or on wages, few studies on transition or in relation to continuing employment
- no research on the impact on women's CV or lost pay and
- no studies comprehensively quantifying the economic costs of menopause
- few studies where work menopause are the prominent focus of the research

The current review was commissioned to build upon the work of Brewer et al, to update the latest evidence produced in the eight years since that report and to see whether the gaps in evidence identified in the review have been addressed. The aim of the report, this literature review, was to review the evidence on what works to support women experiencing menopause in the workplace, and to ensure a paucity of UK evidence was identified.

This literature review aims to understand what the evidence base is on what works to support women experiencing menopause, including in the contemporary phase. As many women are working longer than previously, and the state pension age is increasing, this research focuses on women in employment. This research also uses the term 'menopause' referring to any stage of menopause in which women may experience physiological symptoms. These stages are defined below.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of menopause on women in relation to work and employment?
2. What menopause symptoms are women experiencing in the workplace and how is this impacting them?
3. How does the experience of menopause symptoms at work vary across the population of female workers, by factors such as age, occupation, sector, salary and ethnicity? Do women who have suffered from ill health or disability report more or less experiences of menopause symptoms at work?
4. In what ways does the experience of menopause symptoms influence women's economic participation, including their ability to find work, their ability to remain around progress and promotional opportunities or staying out of the workplace?
5. What support is offered by employers and how effective is it?
6. What support, if any, do employers think should be offered to women experiencing menopausal symptoms, and how does this vary by occupation, sector, size of organisation and so on?
7. How well supported do workers feel by their employer? What is identified as helpful and why?
8. How effective is support such as other interventions of improving staff wellbeing, productivity and reducing staff turnover?
9. Are there any unintended consequences of the provided support?
10. What are the costs and benefits of providing the support?
11. What is the cost to the UK economy women's experiences of menopause in the workplace?
12. What percentage of working women are likely to reduce employment hours and/or leave the labour market as their experience of menopause?
13. What is the estimated sickness absence for women experiencing menopause?
14. What is the estimated presenteeism cost of this issue?
15. Evidence gaps and recommendations.
16. What are the evidence gaps relating to menopause and the workplace and/or labour market? What are the recommendations for addressing these gaps?

8. Methodology

The publications for this review were identified by the DWP Library team, based on search terms and search strategies provided by the research team. Terms used were 'menopause', 'educational', 'economic', 'psychological', 'physiological', and 'temporary', 'temporary', 'climacteric' and 'premenopause', using all relevant synonyms and variations. The search was limited to English language, and to UK and building the protocol review. A scoping review of secondary literature and reviews and consultation with subject experts revealed no new relevant terms to add to this list.

Only research published between April 2016 and October 2024 in English was included in the review. Research published before April 2016 was included in Brewer et al (2016), primarily UK evidence. This review was taken in accordance with Government's cultural diversity in experiences of menopause (Brewer et al, 2017) and because UK evidence is more relevant to UK policy. However, a secondary search of international research was also carried out of the literature review and research, to ensure no key evidence was missed. The search was limited to English language, and to UK and building the protocol review. A scoping review of secondary literature and reviews and consultation with subject experts revealed no new relevant terms to add to this list.

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The EBSCO Discovery Service was used for the literature searches. 55 databases as well as Google Scholar were searched, including Medline, Cochrane Library, Web of Science, Wiley Online Library. Research assessment was considered from the outset, a priority being placed on peer-reviewed literature. Grey literature was included if we considered it to be of high quality, or if it was the only evidence on a topic. Research quality assessments were identified through Critical Appraisal Skills Programme checklists. In this stage of the search, all which were included. In the second round of searching, the research quality assessment was used to decide which studies were included. We did not contain secondary research or systematic reviews. The initial search consisted of robust research and if they provided only background information on the topic, they were not included.

We used a Framework approach to analysis (Ritchie and Spencer 1994; Ritchie et al 2003). In the first stage, we created a table, in Microsoft Excel, the data extraction from the research studies. We used the table to identify the research questions, extracted relevant data, and to make the data publications. This required some adjustments and refinements to our table headings.

Studies relevant to our research questions were added into the table, as well as details of the methods and quality of the studies. Team members checked one another

or repeat an inability to make statistically comparisons due to low numbers of diverse participants.

There is also evidence of an association between menopausal symptoms and women's intention to leave their current employer (Bruce et al., 2020; Hickey et al., 2020). Research report women's intention to reduce hours or leave work due to menopause (Bruce et al., 2020; Hickey and Davies, 2019; Steffan and Petrovich, 2020; Bruce et al., 2021; Hickey et al., 2021; Hickey and Davies, 2022; Hickey et al., 2022; Hickey et al., 2023). In Spain, a case study in a human resources department conducted by Cornejo et al. (2020a) found a correlation between symptom severity, intention to leave work and the impact on work performance. Women reporting severe symptoms, 50% had thought of leaving work, 50% had reduced their hours and 50% had taken sick leave. Women reporting moderate symptoms, 54% reported an intention to reduce working hours, 67% to leave the workforce and 67% had taken sick leave. Women reporting mild symptoms reported average intentions (Cornejo et al., 2020a). Women in Spain who had experienced abuse (about 14/75) of women and 3 years even experiencing menopause said they were more likely to leave their current employer (Cornejo et al., 2020b). Women who had experienced abuse also reported lower scores for their ability to carry out their responsibilities. However, only a very small proportion (30/75) reported reducing their hours because of menopause (Cornejo et al., 2020b). In Australia, 10% of members of a large union reported that menopause had caused them to leave their position (Gallagher et al., 2020). Women in Northern Ireland found no difference between pre, peri and post menopausal women in their intention to leave their current employer, but those experiencing menopause reported that their ability to do their job effectively and to work were associated with a higher intention to leave employment. In fact, the most significant factor for intention to leave was the impact of menopause on their ability to work and stress. These factors also rating as part of a more significant cost than the overall response rate limiting their generalizability. It is also difficult to predict what workers' intentions will actually result in in the workplace.

Two studies are unsaturated in data from the same both cohort and large sample of mixed evidence (Bowen et al., 2020; Greenfield et al., 2021). The result detailed of these studies are contradictory. Bowen et al. (2020) found menopause symptoms related to menopause were significantly associated with intention to reduce hours, reduce roles, negatively, while secondary symptoms tend not to. Every additional menopause symptom increased the odds of reducing hours by 1.4 times and every additional number of older women in the sample increased the odds of reducing hours by 1.3 times. Greenfield et al. (2021) found that the impact of menopause on intention to leave was not significant. Both studies, though, are unsaturated in data, and the interpretation of findings and the impact of a substantial impact on work is also unsaturated in data. Greenfield et al. (2021) found that the impact of menopause on intention to leave work was not significant. Bowen et al. (2020) found that a substantial impact on work. Both studies, though, are unsaturated in data, and the interpretation of findings and the impact of a substantial impact on work is also unsaturated in data. Greenfield et al. (2021) found that the impact of menopause on intention to leave work was not significant. Bowen et al. (2020) found that a substantial impact on work.

3.2. The effectiveness of support for women in the labour market going through menopause

Overall, there is a paucity of evidence of the extent and nature of support offered by employers to women going through menopause. Research has been conducted in Australia, Canada, Ireland, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. Research has been conducted with women in a variety of occupations and sectors, including a large union, a large human resources department, a case study in a human resources department, a large cohort of women in a large union, a large cohort of women in a large union, a large cohort of women in a large union

Parliament. House of Commons (2019). Employment Rights Bill, Bills no. 11 of session 2019-20. https://bit.ly/3Ttl1Ln. [Cited: 15 April 2021].

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	purposive sampling to be interviewed.	pre-test-post-test study using self-report questionnaires. Qual study: semi-structured, in-depth interviews.	benefited menopausal symptoms. This was due to the WLP initiating a process of mental empowerment that encouraged women to openly speak about their personal issues related to midlife and make choices that enhance their health and wellbeing at work.
Verdonk et al. (2022)	36 articles in the main review and a further 27 in the results section, all publications were in English	Literature review	Studies in relation to menopause and work are scarce but increasing . Menopause has a negative impact on work ability. Menopausal complaints could be an explanation for older women's higher sickness absence rates. Menopausal women don't tend to leave the labour force outright. Menopausal women don't speak up about problematic symptoms and engage with individual solutions. Women use individual and workplace strategies successfully to cope with menopause. Menopause being a taboo limits its discussion in the workplace. High resilience of working women is put under pressure by work intensity, age, and labour market shortages
Whiley et al. (2023)	Six cisgender, white, British women with lived experience of menopause working in a professional office space recruited through snowball sampling and personal contacts	Qualitative interviews	Menopause at work is seen as both materially dirty through physical symptoms such as Hot Flushes and metaphorically dirty through the loss of fertility, which impairs women's femininity in a patriarchal setting
Willman & King (2023)	465 complete responses from regular serving women aged 40 and over.	Online Survey	The impact of menopause was greatest in the 7 following themes: coping in the workplace, fearing the effect on careers, accessing healthcare, the management of perimenopause by primary care, physical effects, psychological and cognitive effects, and physical activity. Issues were exacerbated in male-dominated environments.
Yoeli & McLusky (2021)	8 databases were searched using terms like menopause, grey economy, work, migrant and poverty and prioritising articles published after 1995. 13 articles were included.	Narrative review	Women working manual jobs reported musculoskeletal symptoms negatively impacting their performance. Psychological symptoms were more prevalent in lower-paid women working manual jobs. Working conditions were not attributed to difficulties managing symptoms, though the factors driving women into casual work, such as poverty or poor education opportunities, were closely associated with a difficult menopause.

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