

Prevalence of genitourinary symptoms of menopause and impact on health outcomes among Chinese-speaking migrant sex workers

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Background:

Sex workers (SWs) may face unique impacts of genitourinary syndrome of menopause (GSM) due to the nature of sex work. This study investigates the prevalence of GSM in a clinic-based sample of Chinese-speaking SWs, and associations between symptom severity and impact on work and health.

Methods:

A cross-sectional online survey was conducted at a public sexual health service in Sydney, Australia. Participants were recruited from the service's clinic dedicated to Chinese-speaking SWs. Clients were eligible if they were cisgender female and aged 45 years or older.

The survey was administered in Simplified Chinese and included an abbreviated Personal Wellbeing Index; a modified Greene Climacteric Scale; and the Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause Symptoms and Vaginal Treatment Acceptability Questionnaire.

Associations between GSM severity and outcome measures were assessed with Chi-squared tests.

Results:

Seventy-three participants were recruited between 21/01/2025 and 21/09/2025. Median age was 54 years (IQR:50-58).

Using STRAW10+ criteria, 47 (64.4%) participants were staged as postmenopausal, and 13 (17.8%) as peri-menopausal. Most peri- or post-menopausal participants

reported GSM (n=49/59; 83.1%), 29 (59.2%) of whom reported moderate-to-severe symptoms.

Compared to participants with no/mild GSM, those with moderate-to-severe symptoms reported significant impacts on wellbeing and work capacity; including less satisfaction with their work (24.1% vs 63.3%; $p=0.002$) and general health (31.0% vs 63.3%; $p=0.013$), an increased need to take time off work due to untreated symptoms (75.9% vs 43.3%; $p=0.011$), and significant adverse effects on physical activity and sleep (58.6% vs 13.3%; $p=0.001$, and 84.0% vs 48.3%; $p=0.006$, respectively).

Conclusion:

GSM is highly prevalent amongst Chinese-speaking female SW clients of this urban sexual health service. Reducing symptom severity may significantly improve the personal and professional lives of menopausal SWs. SW-specific services should be designed in collaboration with SW peer organisations to provide culturally competent and accessible GSM-related care.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None.