Menopause TLI. Too Little Information.

The global conversation deficit

In a world of TMI, why is this one natural topic still TLI?
Foreword

Menopause.
We know the word.
We know the basic biology – our periods stop!
And we know about hot flushes!
But do we know enough? Do we understand
the phases – and that menopause is actually
the end of the journey, but perimenopause
is the time we start to experience symptoms?
Do we share our experience? Do we speak up
and get the support we need?
No, we don’t.
There is no shame in being a woman and
embarrassment is being stripped from topics
like feminine care, menstruation, pregnancy,
and breast feeding. Yet menopause still eludes
conversation.

At Avon we believe in the power of ‘speaking up’.
We believe that by sharing stories and experiences
we can affect genuine change for good.

• We have invested millions in supporting
women to speak up against Domestic
Violence.

• For 20 years we have helped normalise the
conversation around breast cancer, helping
women spot changes that could be the life-
saving early indicator of the illness.

• For 135 years we have supported women
to speak up about their right to earn and
enable them to have that freedom.

In a world of TMI – too much information –
Menopause is still TLI

That is why we undertook this research. We spoke
to hundreds of women across the globe to gain
quantitative understanding of the realities. When
symptoms start v. expectations; the physical
symptoms; the emotional impact; who women
are speaking to; where they go to get information
and the barriers they face. We also spoke to our
wider community of women, who shared their
personal experiences and stories.

To help gain perspective on the data we
shared our findings with GP and women’s health
specialist Dr Sarah Jarvis, who has given us
invaluable advice and responses to some of
the issues raised.

We believe as an accessible beauty brand we can
help ease some of the physical symptoms with
innovative new product development. We also
hope to begin to break the silence. With our 5 million
Avon representatives worldwide we believe we can
start to normalise the conversation.

44% of women across the world
were unaware of
perimenopause

46% did not expect
perimenopause
to start when it did

Given this happens to all women, I found these
statistics shocking. Yet I identify. I too felt
unprepared for those first symptoms. Just a
few years after having my third child I was told
I was perimenopausal. WHAT? It felt like just a
minute ago I'd been pregnant. Surely I was too
young. I felt too young.

In a world of social sharing, where the fabric of
our lives is posted – from our breakfasts to our
baby scan images, our fears, our failures, our hopes
our dreams - this is one of the stories of women’s
lives that remains untold.

There's little conversation, little celebration,
few public role models and therefore little
understanding.

LET'S START TO SPEAK UP
ABOUT MENOPAUSE
AND PERIMENOPAUSE
and help women through this
time of great change.

Gina Ghura
Executive Director of Innovation, Avon Worldwide
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The Cycle of Change. Peri – What?

Menopause refers to when your body has stopped ovulating. The average age of menopause is 51 ½ years old, but doctors consider it normal to go through the menopause any time from age 45. An early menopause is between 40 and 45 years old, while going through menopause before the age of 40 is described as premature menopause.

Although you officially reach the menopause when you’ve had your last period, you won’t know at the time that you’ll never have another one. Doctors don’t say that period was definitely your last until a year since you last menstruated.

However the perimenopause stage is the process leading up to that change as your body starts to undergo the huge changes to your hormonal balance.

At this time women start to experience many initial symptoms, and this is often much earlier than they expect. They are not yet ‘menopausal age’ and still have periods, albeit often erratic, so are often surprised to find perimenopause is the cause.

In the years leading up to the perimenopause, the number of follicles (eggs) starts to dwindle. The female hormones produced by your ovary play a major part in controlling the natural ebb and flow of hormones that results in periods.

By the time most women get irregular symptoms, the number of eggs has dropped dramatically. This means you’re less likely to become pregnant – although there is still a chance, so it’s essential to keep using contraception.

Between 3 and 7 in 10 women get hot flushes in the early perimenopause. Unfortunately, the longer the time between getting these hot flushes and your last period, the longer they’re likely to last. While in the past, doctors used to tell women hot flushes lasted a couple of years, we now know it’s not unusual to have them for a decade and the average is about 7 years.

Hot flushes and night sweats also increase the chance of sleep disturbance. However, many women find their sleep pattern changing in their 40s even if they haven’t developed hot flushes.

Menopause is a commonly understood term, but the preceding process, the perimenopausal phase, is far less understood. Officially you reach the menopause when you have your last period. But the perimenopause, leading up to your final period, can last anywhere from a few months to 4 years.

I see that in my surgery all the time, and these findings demonstrate that this is a truly global information gap.

Dr Sarah Jarvis

44% were unaware of perimenopause, until they started to have symptoms

46% did not expect perimenopause when it started, and this figure is even higher amongst UK women, with more than half (53%) being surprised when they started to experience symptoms

34% don’t understand the two phases, perimenopause and menopause, despite being in one of these phases

46% of women did not feel prepared for the menopause.

While women in Poland, India and Russia were largely more aware.

Nearly 6 out of 10 women in the UK were not expecting the perimenopause when it started.

For half of women in South Africa and almost as many in Brazil and Mexico this was also the case.
As the data reflects, the perimenopausal phase lasts between 3 and 5 years, but for most it is closer to 5 years. Although there is a lot of variability, the average age of menopause is about 51 years old. That means that for the majority of women, perimenopause is experienced from the age of around 45 years old.

For about 20% of the population it can be younger, and for about 20% it can be later... There is no specific reason why perimenopause tends to last longer – genetics play a huge part but studies have suggested lifestyle and general health can play a part.

Most women have heard that the menopause can lead to hot flushes, night sweats and vaginal dryness. But they have no idea symptoms can start years before their last period; and very few are aware of other symptoms like night sweats, mood changes, problems concentrating, tiredness and changes to skin and hair.

My husband didn’t believe in me and the hormonal changes are horrible. I have gained a lot of weight.

Verónica, Mexico

How long did perimenopause last?

- **Brazil**: 3 years and 8 months
- **Mexico**: 3 years and 5 months
- **South Africa**: 4 years
- **India**: 3 years and 3 months
- **UK**: 4 years and 11 months
- **Poland**: 4 years and 7 months
- **Russia**: 4 years and 6 months

There is not a specific reason why perimenopause tends to last longer but genetics, lifestyle, general health, and cultural perspective are elements that impact women who experience it.
The reason women really need to understand the symptoms of the perimenopause phase is because the hormonal changes can affect mood significantly. This can be a time of anguish for many. As many as 3 in 10 women also experience memory problems, which can cause enormous anxiety as well as affecting self-esteem and day-to-day activities.

Knowing that mood can be so severely affected by the change in hormones is essential to help women navigate this time. I’ve seen so many women in my surgery thinking they’ve fallen out of love with their husbands because they no longer want to have sex or feel irritated all the time. I’ve seen women come in asking for anti-depressants without ever considering these changes to their emotional well-being could be a result of hormonal surges and the perimenopause.

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**Emotionally Charged**

Globally 44% of women said they felt anxious during perimenopause. A figure which leapt to nearly three quarters of for Indian women feeling (71%) and more than half of Polish women (56%) also feeling that way.

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**The main emotions women felt during perimenopause...**

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<td>Anxious 58%</td>
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<td>Anxious 71%</td>
<td>Educated 42%</td>
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<td>Unsure 33%</td>
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**Laura’s story**

“I was in the prime of my career, I had two children under 4 and I started to feel really anxious – to doubt myself and to question my every move.

I started to experience insomnia, and my marriage started to suffer. I thought I was experiencing depression, but my doctor said it was likely down to hormone changes as I was perimenopausal. I felt there must be something wrong with me. I thought that would happen in my 50s. Not in my mid 40s. I had toddlers for heaven’s sake. I started to speak to friends and realised they felt the same. I got some support - acupuncture worked for me, and I cut back on alcohol. I can see my friends struggling with anger and rage or anxiety and I suggest they go and find out if it’s hormonal. Often they think they’re too young too. But I can see the same is happening to them.”

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**Dr Sarah Jarvis**

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“I always thought it wasn’t true. I feel a lot of headaches, the redness on my face stings and worst of all I am depressed. It seems every day I feel insecure.”

Ana, Brazil

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Brazil | Mexico | South Africa | India | UK | Poland | Russia
What are the Physical Symptoms?

Hot flushes and irregular periods are the main pre-known symptoms.

According to the women surveyed, hot flushes were universally the most arduous of the physical symptoms.

Weight gain was commonly considered a major challenge for women in Brazil, India, Poland and Russia – this is a symptom that was not expected.

Night sweats and headaches featured as another challenging symptom.

“It’s called a ‘flush, or a flash’ for a reason. And it’s a reassuring reason… hot flushes last between 60 seconds and 6 minutes. It is unpleasant. But it is temporary.”

Dr Sarah Jarvis

The most difficult symptoms to deal with were...

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<th>1st</th>
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<th>Hot Flashes</th>
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<td>2nd</td>
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<td>Weight Gain</td>
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<td>Night Sweats</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
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Brazil Mexico South Africa India UK Poland Russia

Symptoms affect those around us too.

27% strongly or completely agree that their family find their symptoms overwhelming.

This further suggests we should be talking and helping our families understand why we are behaving as we are.
Regardless of race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, economic circumstances and cultural differences, women will experience the perimenopause and menopause. While each woman’s experience is different, there are universal symptoms and experiences. And yet we are not talking about it – not even amongst ourselves.

Most nationalities showed surprisingly low figures for talking about perimenopause and menopause. In Russia more than half of women are uncomfortable talking about it, while it left around a third or more women uncomfortable in Brazil, South Africa and India.

Many don’t feel comfortable talking to partners...

A fear of ageism was a real concern for significant number of women, particularly in India and Poland.

Interestingly many women, in all countries, said they didn’t discuss with their friends because they wouldn’t understand - they weren’t going through it themselves. Of course, chances are they were, and just no one was speaking up!

None of them were going through it. Lesedi, South Africa

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<th>% not comfortable to talk with their friends because...</th>
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<td>I don’t like to talk about my personal problems to friends.</td>
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<td>I don’t talk about it with friends, it’s a personal matter.</td>
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<td>Don’t want to bored people with this topic, it’s too personal.</td>
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<td>It’s not natural to discuss this topic with friends.</td>
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<th>I do not like discussing those topics with my partner.</th>
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<td>I felt I was too young and he would not agree with the diagnosis.</td>
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#avonTLI #avonTLI
Advice to others: “Seek Support”

Paradoxically, and having come through menopause, women recommend others do seek out information and speak to someone trusted.

"Make sure you have a support network of friends." Preeti, India

"Please don’t feel that you are alone and talk to your friends - the kind of friends who you feel can understand and are knowledgeable about the menopause to help you through it." Diviya, India

"Seek advice, talk to friends." Eleanor, UK

"It helps to speak and share your experiences in order to inform the next person." Mary, South Africa

What advice would you give?

"Treat it as something natural in life and get information from your doctor." Brazil

"Go to your gynaecologist and gain information." Mexico

"Get informed and speak to someone trusted that will understand." South Africa

"It is a natural condition for women. Consult a gynaecologist." India

"Read and talk about it. Accept it. Don’t suffer." UK

"Take care, read a lot about that topic. Find a good gynaecologist." Poland

"Life goes on. Find out more about menopause and visit the gynaecologist." Russia

Avon Representative, Karen’s story

"Perimenopause, what on earth, well the hormones are going nuts, the brain is going to mush, the figure is deciding as to whether or not it wants to stay the way it is, or maybe imitate Mr Stay Puft from Ghostbusters."

You have to change the way you eat, change the way you sleep, change more or less everything to try to get through it. Then, BAM menopause comes and you thought that you had gone through it all already. Oh no, now the night sweats come. A friend’s husband actually slept in the spare room; he turned over one night and she had the most massive puddle on her stomach, just through sweat. Your hormones are shot, you are advised to go onto HRT, some people do, some people don’t, the emotions are rocketing, tears come, anger comes, all you want is for it to end. And it finally does. Finally you are free, free to keep calm and carry on – my friend has never felt better and I only hope that I have half the energy that she does when I’m finally out the other side.

Look after yourself, take time to have a pamper and step back from everything whenever you can – you are important at this time, remember that."
As women are so uncomfortable discussing perimenopause and menopause, it’s perhaps natural that they would turn to more ‘discreet’, but possibly unsubstantiated, sources of information.

In the UK women were more likely to find out information from:

- **53%** from the internet
- **24%** from a healthcare professional

And universally, ‘online’, was highlighted as the most popular source of information at 31%, above gynaecologists, GPs, mothers, or friends.

Online information, however, is not trusted by many women. Only 28% in India (highest rate) trust online information. Most women view it as conflicting and confusing.

Despite the age at which you start perimenopause /menopause and strength of symptoms often following maternal patterns, only 6% of women globally said their mother was the best source of advice. This was even lower in the UK where only 3% of women said their mum was the best source.

### Clare’s story

“I found out at 37 I was going through the menopause. My mother then said that had happened to her too. I could not forgive her. I meant I’d lost the chance to conceive naturally. I’ll never forgive my mother for not telling me her story, and giving me the information. I’ve no doubt I would have tried to start my family much earlier had I known.”

### Dr Sarah J arvis

“This is a time of major change in your body’s biochemical make up. Your hormones are in more of a state of flux than during puberty, yet unlike during puberty you are now a grown up, juggling a job, a partner and children, who may well be hormonal teens themselves. In my experience, women have huge pressure on them and put enormous pressure on themselves to be strong. They’re highly likely to be working and all too many are members of the ‘squeezed middle’; juggling commitments of caring for both children and elderly, frail parents. All too often this comes at a cost to themselves – time to put their own needs first is a distant dream. I’ve lost count of the number of times women in the perimenopause have told me that functioning at less than 100% efficiency is just not an option.

Women of perimenopausal and menopausal age are expected to be a constant to so many others. To partners, children, colleagues, elderly parents… And yet inside we could be raging; feeling confused; sad; anxious; questioning. We can feel un-sexy and unattractive… And then we feel guilty for feeling and behaving in this strange way.

As with all mental health issues, of which anxiety or mood changes of any sort should be classed, talking about it is the first step. Knowing you are not alone, that others feel the same, that it will pass … All of this can make a significant difference.”

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### Miriam’s story:

“It’s like puberty. When a child reaches puberty there are so many changes physical and emotional. We take it calmly “my little girl/or boy is all grown up and it’s only natural” with a big smile on our face. Yet when ladies who are all grown up we get so emotional and anxious - looks like we are the children now. Please ladies live your life. Accept it, it is only natural. You need to sing the song “Happy Days are here again”… No more pregnancy, no more pills, no more injections, no more pads, but lots of sex.”
The Skinny: Menopause and its Impact on Skin

Gina Ghura
Executive Director of Innovation, Avon Worldwide

For the last two decades we’ve been researching the impact of changing hormones on skin condition. Increased dryness and sensitivity are common in perimenopausal skin as well as that overwhelming hot sweat and redness of flashes. What really interested us was the significant loss of collagen that happens in the first 5 years of perimenopause... indeed up to 30% loss. These are all changes we noticed in-vitro and have now seen reinforced by this new research. This study also demonstrates that, for many women, finding accessible, affordable products that support these specific skin needs is currently very challenging.

It’s good to focus on this age, they’re not forgetting about us, we do care about looking after our skin, maybe more so than younger women.

Jana, Poland

The worst part of menopause is that you start to visibly age, rapidly. Is there anything that can reverse it?

Beata, UK

69% of women had issues with dry or sensitive skin during menopause

Mexico presented the highest rate

87% suffered with their dry skin

UK presents the lowest, yet still

40% have suffered with their sensitive skin

How many women have suffered with skincare symptom?

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<tr>
<td>Dry Skin</td>
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<td>59%</td>
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<td>Sensitive Skin</td>
<td>51%</td>
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<td>53%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<td>Blotchy Skin</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breakouts</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<td>51%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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Most women experience multiple skin care symptoms, in particular dry and sensitive skin.

Easy to find a skin care product for your changing skin needs?

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Furthermore, through our community of more than 5 million representatives worldwide, we pledge to support beyond skincare. We pledge to open-up the conversation, to share our experiences and to provide support and information.

At Avon we understand that every woman’s journey is different. And when your skin changes, we’re here to help. We’ve poured the best science, innovation and ingredients into creating this range. A range that we have insisted is democratic – accessible and affordable to all to serve all the women and cultures we support globally. We’ve listened to what women want beyond skincare needs too – also in terms of packaging design, colour and feel.. In essence Avon adapt has been created in partnership with women, listening to their desire to regain a sense of self, of self-love and of calm.

The science that has gone into the development is truly holistic – for example our Dream Cream not only helps boost the collagen loss experienced in perimenopause, also helps to tighten and plump sagging skin, but it also includes innovative fragrance technology. There are many studies that show how fragrance can have a positive impact on mood, so we worked hard on our fragrance selection in all our ranges. As the name suggests our Dream Cream helps to alleviate the symptom of insomnia through a fragrance of jasmine and lavender.

Hot Flashes are one of the most common skin complaints. Our Icy Cooling Elixir Facial Mist features Tillicora, a plant native to South Asia and an exclusive Avon adaptogen, which helps cool the skin and increases hydration and firmness. Again, the fragrance too is key, helping to ‘cool’ and calm your mood, not just your skin.

Adapt Hydra Rescue on the Go Serum works to support dry skin caused by the reduction in oestrogen. The lightweight formula can be used throughout the day and over make up to boost skin moisture by 98%. Turmeric supports anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity.

Gina Ghura
Executive Director of Innovation, Avon Worldwide
Change for Good….

Together we will ADAPT, and THRIVE!

This in-depth global study has certainly not revealed a sugar-coated portrayal of the menopause and perimenopause. Far from it. It’s an incredibly challenging time for women, both physically and, perhaps even more so, emotionally.

But what this study has revealed is that we can help ourselves, and future generations, by opening up, speaking up and sharing our experiences. By collectively shaking off the shame, the embarrassment, and the awkwardness that surrounds the menopause. Information and conversation help normalisation. And menopause is normal, it’s natural and it will happen to 50% of the World’s population.

So let’s discuss those flashes, those mood swings, those sleepless nights and dry skin. Let’s too share that joyful liberation from periods, that feeling of a new start, that amazing sex!

Let’s sweat together, let’s cry together... and then let’s laugh together and let’s get through it together.

Women have achieved so much. We have experienced so much and we will weather this period too. As a woman we spoke to in Brazil said so eloquently, “this is just another, among so many phases of life.”

Together let’s reverse this phenomenon of TLI. Let’s flood our conversations and social threads with TMI. Our commitment at Avon is to do just that. To Speak up. To talk. Our community of representatives in 100 countries worldwide pledge to speak up about their experiences, to encourage their customers to talk about theirs, and to provide valuable information and support.

When asked what advice you would give?

“Take each day as it comes, eat well, exercise and enjoy not having periods anymore.”
Lena, UK

“Stop thinking that it is the beginning of old age or that one no longer feels much of a “woman”, it is actually a wonderful phase!”
Gabriella, Mexico

“We must feel comfortable with ourselves, there can be no pressure, we have to adapt to each stage, enjoy life... with a chocolate.”
Rosa, Mexico

“Listen to your feelings and adjust/adapt to them.”
Nadya, Russia

71% agree they are glad they won’t have to deal with monthly periods anymore

36% feel liberated and excited about life

41% say menopause has made them feel brave and able to take on new challenges

1/4 A quarter of women globally say that since menopause they’ve had the best sex of their lives

#avanTLI #avanTLI

Menopause TLI Too Little Information.

When asked what advice you would give?
Methodology

Sample

N=707 completes (~100 per country)

Women going through perimenopause and menopause

45-65 years old

Fieldwork

The study was conducted with same sample size among all countries and a majority of the sample are between 45-54 years old. UK and Poland have the highest representation of older women – natural fall.

What is the profile for these women?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>45-54 y.o.</th>
<th>55-65 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<td>77%</td>
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<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disclaimer

All names have been changed throughout