

Original Paper

A study on unidentified complaints of women

Yumi HIRUTA *Aino Gakuin College*

Abstract

We surveyed the mental health condition in the daily life with 216 women from 14 to 84 years old, and examined their unidentified complaints in relation to age. The results were as follows: There were two age periods of unstable psychological conditions among women 14-19 and 50-59 years old. Young women showed a diversity of strong unidentified complaints compared with middle-aged and elderly women. Middle-aged and elderly women showed fewer unidentified complaints than young women. These findings suggested that complaints of physical symptoms could be classified according to age.

Key words : women, unidentified complaints, lifestyle, CMI, SMI

Introduction

The term "unidentified complaints" is reported to be a unique expression in Japan by Tamada (1998). By International Classification of Disease (ICD-10), "Unidentified Complaints" would correspond to F45.1 Undifferentiated somatoform disorder, or F45.3 Somatoform autonomic dysfunction in F45 Somatization disorders.

The unidentified complaints of middle-age women are thought to involve internal secretion factors, social and cultural factors, and psychological and personality factors. These three types of factors are not independent of each other and seem to be interrelated (Koyama, 1999; Ushiroyama, 1999). At present, unidentified complaints are noted in practice in fields ranging from pediatrics to geriatrics, not only in women but also in men in every department of medical practice (Kihara, 2001; Tazawa, 1998; Sekiya, 2001).

This survey was conducted to find the causes of unidentified complaints of women to enable treatment. For example, physical symptoms are known to decrease following the decrease of ovarian function. Thus, if social and cultural, psychological and personality factors related to unidentified complaints could be classified, such complaints might be minimized or

prevented. Ways of minimizing or preventing such complaint may be possible. We decided to examine the characteristics of unidentified complaints from the aspects of personality and life styles of women and to suggest how to incorporate the materials for health education for complete wellness programs for women.

Methods

1. Subjects

The subjects were 216 women who were students of Aino Gakuin College and women working in Aino Hospital, and their mothers and daughters. They were asked to respond to the questionnaires, with the overall response rate being 71.3%.

2. Questionnaire

The subjects were given the following questionnaires.

2-1. Questions about physical health condition, past disease, lifestyle, working conditions, relationships with friends, family relationships, and self-evaluation of quality of life.

2-2. Measurement of psychological characteristics by Cornell Medical Index

We used the Cornell Medical Index – Health Questionnaire (CMI) which was modified by Kanehisa and Fukamachi (1959) for the Japanese to measure self-consciousness of physical and mental health conditions. This questionnaire consisted of 162 items for self-consciousness of physical health condition and 51 items for self-consciousness of mental health condition. Each item could be answered “yes” or “no.” “Yes” was scored 1 and “No” 0, the total score being used for evaluation of the psychological condition. Thus, the results were expressed as a total score, ranging from 0 (least) to 213 (full) points. For judgment of emotional disturbance, the score was classified from 1 to 4 stages (Fukamachi’s classification, 1959). Stage 1 indicated a normal psychological condition, stage 2 a high possibility of normal psychological condition, stage 3 a high possibility of neurosis and stage 4 neurosis.

2-3. Measurement of Unidentified Complaints by Simplified Menopause Index.

We used the Simplified Menopause Index (SMI) which was developed by Koyama (1992) and modified by Nozue (1999) to measure unidentified complaints. Nozue’s scale consisted of 12 items concerning vasomotor, paresthesia, palpitation, insomnia, irritability, melancholia, headache/dizziness/nausea, exhaustion, stiff shoulders/lumbago, and symptoms of urogenital systems. Each item consisted of 4 stages from “nothing” to “strong.” The results were expressed as a total score, ranging from 0 (least) to 120 (full) points, and the higher the score, the stronger being the unidentified complaints.

The data were examined for the age ranges of over 60, 50–59, 40–49, 30–39, 20–29, 14–19 years old.

3. Study period

The study period was from January to March, 2001.

4. Ethical consideration

The present survey was carried out to ensure anonymity and the data were all processed statistically. Questionnaires were answered by those who freely agreed to cooperate with this survey, and special caution was paid to not advantage or disadvantage the decision of whether or not to participate in this survey. Particular care was taken to privacy.

Results

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the characteristics of 216 women subjects in the present study in relation to age. The average height and average weight were in the range of the average Japanese women reported by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) in 1998. Body Mass Index (BMI) was also consistent with the average Japanese women from the MHW research in 1998: 20.4 for 14–19, 19.8 for 30–39, 21.3 for 40–49, 25.0 for 50–59, 22.4 for 60–84 years old. For occupation, 97% of the 14–19 years old, and 48.6% of the 20–29-year-olds were students, while over 70% of the 30–39-year-olds women were working full-time or part-time. There were 99 married women (45.8%) and 106 women who had children (49.1%).

Table 3 summarizes the relationships with friends and family in relation to age. Of the 36 women 50–59 years old, 22.2% said that they had no friend (Table 3-1), and many of the 20–39-year-old women had no friend in the neighborhood (Table 3-2). More than 48% of the women over 40 years old had various worries about their husbands (Table 3-5). More than

Table 1 Physical characteristics of subjects depending on age

n=216

Item	Age	Average (SD)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
Average age (SD)		18.7 (1.01)	22.8 (2.47)	33.7 (3.16)	45.9 (2.41)	54.9 (3.07)	71.0 (8.00)
Average height (cm) (SD)		157.6 (4.66)	159.1 (4.42)	156.4 (5.56)	155.5 (4.49)	153.5 (4.85)	151.9 (6.19)
Average weight (kg) (SD)		52.3 (5.66)	52.4 (8.66)	50.8 (7.80)	54.4 (7.56)	56.2 (8.34)	50.3 (6.34)

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Table 2 Lifestyle of subjects depending on age

n=216

Item	Age	Numbers (%)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
1 Job situation							
Student		65 (97.0)	14 (42.4)	2 (20.0)	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Not working outside		1 (1.5)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.8)	3 (8.3)	3 (37.5)
Working full-time		0 (0.0)	11 (33.3)	7 (70.0)	27 (43.5)	18 (50.0)	1 (12.5)
Working part-time		0 (0.0)	5 (15.3)	0 (0.0)	18 (29.0)	6 (16.7)	1 (12.5)
Working self-supporting		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (14.5)	2 (5.6)	0 (0.0)
Others		1 (1.5)	1 (3.0)	1 (10.0)	4 (6.5)	7 (19.4)	1 (12.5)
NA		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (25.0)
2 Married	yes	0 (0.0)	3 (9.1)	4 (40.0)	58 (93.5)	30 (83.3)	4 (50.0)
	no	66 (98.5)	30 (90.9)	6 (60.0)	3 (4.8)	6 (16.7)	4 (50.0)
	NA	1 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
3 Child	yes	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	2 (20.0)	60 (96.8)	34 (94.4)	8 (100)
	no	64 (95.5)	31 (93.9)	8 (80.0)	2 (3.2)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
	NA	3 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
4 Usage of medicine	use	3 (4.5)	4 (12.1)	3 (30.0)	17 (27.4)	13 (36.1)	4 (50.0)
	no use	57 (85.1)	28 (84.8)	7 (70.0)	43 (69.4)	21 (58.3)	2 (25.0)
	NA	7 (10.4)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.2)	2 (5.6)	2 (25.0)
5 Past disease	yes	14 (20.9)	5 (15.2)	3 (30.0)	34 (54.8)	19 (52.8)	7 (87.5)
	no	53 (79.1)	28 (84.9)	7 (70.0)	28 (45.2)	17 (47.2)	1 (12.5)

NA : Not available

Table 3 Relation with friends, family relation and evaluation of quality of life

Item	Age	Numbers (%)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
1. Friends	yes	62 (92.5)	32 (97.0)	9 (90.0)	59 (95.2)	28 (77.8)	8 (100)
	no	4 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (10.0)	3 (4.8)	8 (22.2)	0 (0.0)
	NA	1 (1.5)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2. Friends in the neighborhood	yes	36 (53.7)	14 (42.4)	5 (50.0)	47 (75.8)	23 (63.9)	6 (75.0)
	no	30 (44.8)	17 (51.5)	5 (50.0)	15 (24.2)	13 (36.1)	1 (12.5)
	NA	1 (1.5)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (12.5)
3. Talking with husband	very well	0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)	3 (30.0)	20 (32.3)	14 (39.4)	1 (12.5)
	somewhat well	0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)	1 (10.0)	23 (37.1)	9 (25.0)	2 (25.0)
	not much	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (24.2)	6 (16.7)	1 (12.5)
	not at all	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
	NA	67 (100)	31 (93.9)	6 (60.0)	4 (6.5)	6 (16.7)	4 (50.0)
4. Understanding from husband	very well	0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)	1 (10.0)	18 (29.0)	10 (27.8)	1 (12.5)
	somewhat well	0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)	3 (30.0)	23 (37.1)	15 (41.7)	1 (12.5)
	not much	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (25.8)	4 (11.1)	2 (25.0)
	not at all	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
	NA	67 (100)	31 (93.9)	6 (60.0)	4 (6.5)	6 (16.7)	4 (50.0)
5. Worries about husband	yes	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	1 (10.0)	30 (48.4)	17 (47.2)	4 (50.0)
	no	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (30.0)	28 (45.2)	13 (36.1)	0 (0.0)
	NA	67 (100)	31 (93.9)	6 (60.0)	4 (6.5)	6 (16.7)	4 (50.0)
6. Talking with families	very well	28 (41.8)	6 (18.2)	3 (30.0)	23 (37.1)	13 (36.1)	3 (37.5)
	somewhat well	21 (31.3)	14 (42.4)	4 (40.0)	28 (45.2)	16 (44.4)	2 (25.0)
	not much	13 (19.4)	11 (33.3)	1 (10.0)	9 (14.5)	6 (16.7)	3 (37.5)
	not at all	3 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	NA	2 (3.0)	2 (6.1)	1 (10.0)	2 (3.2)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
7. Understanding from families	very well	23 (34.3)	8 (24.2)	3 (30.0)	12 (19.4)	8 (22.2)	2 (25.0)
	somewhat well	35 (52.2)	15 (45.5)	6 (60.0)	41 (66.1)	20 (55.6)	6 (75.0)
	not much	9 (13.4)	10 (30.3)	1 (10.0)	7 (11.3)	7 (19.4)	0 (0.0)
	not at all	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
	NA	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)

Table 3 Relation with friends, family relation and evaluation of quality of life (continue)

Item	Age	Numbers (%)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
8. Worries about families							
yes		40 (59.7)	18 (54.5)	6 (60.0)	40 (64.5)	25 (69.4)	3 (37.5)
no		27 (40.3)	15 (45.5)	4 (40.0)	21 (33.9)	11 (30.6)	5 (62.5)
NA		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
9. Having a will							
very well		43 (59.7)	17 (51.6)	7 (70.0)	32 (51.6)	16 (44.4)	2 (25.0)
somewhat well		20 (29.9)	9 (27.3)	2 (20.0)	18 (29.0)	15 (41.7)	2 (25.0)
not much		4 (6.0)	7 (21.2)	1 (10.0)	10 (16.1)	3 (8.3)	2 (25.0)
not at all		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	2 (5.6)	2 (25.0)
NA		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
10. Trying to challenge							
very well		32 (47.8)	18 (54.6)	6 (60.0)	25 (40.3)	14 (38.9)	2 (25.0)
somewhat well		26 (38.8)	9 (27.3)	1 (10.0)	23 (37.1)	14 (38.9)	2 (25.0)
not much		8 (11.9)	5 (15.2)	3 (30.0)	10 (16.1)	6 (16.7)	2 (25.0)
not at all		1 (1.5)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (4.8)	1 (2.8)	2 (25.0)
NA		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
11. Overall happiness							
very well		12 (17.9)	8 (24.2)	5 (50.0)	14 (22.6)	6 (16.7)	0 (0.0)
somewhat well		37 (55.2)	19 (57.6)	4 (40.0)	42 (67.7)	24 (66.7)	3 (37.5)
not much		15 (22.4)	5 (15.2)	1 (10.0)	5 (8.1)	6 (16.7)	5 (62.5)
not at all		3 (4.5)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
NA		0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

NA : Not available

Table 4 CMI average score depending on age

Item	Age	Average score (SD)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
Physical symptoms							
A Eyes and ears	10	2.0 (1.47)	1.7 (1.40)	1.6 (1.81)	<i>1.2</i> (1.13)	2.2 (1.61)	2.6 (1.60)
B Respiratory	21	2.9 (2.77)	2.4 (2.40)	2.9 (2.93)	<i>1.5</i> (2.22)	2.1 (2.44)	2.1 (2.70)
C Cardiovascular	14	1.5 (1.82)	<i>1.4</i> (2.11)	1.8 (1.30)	1.5 (1.89)	2.5 (2.49)	1.6 (2.33)
D Digestive	28	4.1 (2.91)	4.9 (3.91)	4.6 (2.07)	3.1 (2.80)	4.3 (3.34)	<i>1.4</i> (0.92)
E Muscle and skeletal	10	<i>1.1</i> (1.04)	<i>1.1</i> (1.11)	<i>1.1</i> (0.93)	<i>1.1</i> (1.03)	1.5 (1.72)	1.4 (2.77)
F Skin	9	1.7 (1.57)	2.2 (1.83)	1.7 (1.66)	0.9 (1.19)	1.0 (1.08)	0.3 (0.46)
G Nervous	19	1.7 (1.97)	1.7 (1.84)	1.1 (1.90)	<i>1.0</i> (1.23)	1.4 (1.97)	1.1 (1.73)
H Urinary and genitals	13	2.6 (2.11)	2.8 (1.92)	2.6 (1.42)	<i>1.5</i> (1.71)	1.9 (1.58)	<i>1.5</i> (1.07)
I Exhaustion	7	1.6 (1.42)	1.6 (1.61)	0.7 (0.71)	0.8 (1.21)	1.1 (1.32)	1.5 (1.69)
J Frequency of illness	9	0.4 (0.89)	0.5 (0.93)	0.7 (1.32)	0.3 (0.90)	0.6 (1.25)	0.4 (0.74)
K Past disease	15	0.5 (0.70)	0.6 (0.81)	1.0 (1.32)	1.1 (1.08)	1.4 (1.44)	0.5 (0.76)
L Habits	7	1.9 (1.09)	2.0 (1.41)	1.4 (1.13)	1.5 (1.10)	2.0 (1.61)	<i>1.2</i> (0.83)
C. I. J	30	3.6 (3.20)	3.4 (3.04)	3.1 (2.42)	2.6 (3.16)	4.2 (3.81)	3.5 (3.66)
Total score	162	22.0 (12.50)	23.5 (12.70)	21.3 (8.73)	<i>15.7</i> (10.71)	22.0 (13.92)	19.4 (12.01)
Mental symptoms							
M Disadaptation	12	3.8 (2.79)	3.5 (3.03)	1.6 (1.74)	1.7 (1.89)	2.5 (2.69)	0.5 (1.07)
N Depression	6	0.7 (1.36)	0.7 (1.35)	0.4 (1.01)	0.3 (0.65)	0.8 (1.50)	<i>0.1</i> (0.35)
O Anxiety	9	1.3 (1.35)	1.1 (1.61)	1.1 (0.93)	2.0 (1.19)	1.2 (1.57)	<i>0.8</i> (1.16)
P Nervousness	6	1.2 (1.40)	1.0 (1.33)	1.2 (1.20)	0.8 (1.11)	<i>0.1</i> (1.04)	0.4 (0.74)
Q Irritability	9	2.0 (2.00)	1.9 (2.40)	1.7 (2.55)	1.0 (1.34)	1.9 (2.03)	0.6 (1.19)
R Tension	9	1.3 (1.62)	0.9 (1.21)	<i>0.6</i> (0.73)	0.7 (0.91)	1.2 (1.38)	<i>0.6</i> (1.19)
Total score	51	10.4 (7.81)	9.2 (8.75)	6.6 (4.95)	5.5 (5.07)	7.8 (7.96)	3.0 (3.59)

(Footnotes)

- 1) Bold type indicates the highest score depending on age.
- 2) Italic type indicates the lowest score depending on age.
- 3) C.I.J indicates total score of cardiovascular, exhaustion and frequency of illness.

Table 5 CMI score classification depending on age

Classification	Age	Numbers (%)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
I		17 (25.4)	10 (30.3)	4 (40.0)	40 (64.5)	12 (33.3)	4 (50.0)
II		31 (46.3)	12 (36.4)	5 (50.0)	14 (22.6)	13 (39.4)	4 (50.0)
III		17 (25.4)	8 (24.2)	1 (10.0)	7 (11.3)	8 (22.2)	0 (0.0)
IV		2 (3.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	3 (8.3)	0 (0.0)
NA		0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

(Standard of CMI classification)

- I : Normal psychological condition
- II : High possibility of normal psychological condition
- III : High possibility of neurosis
- IV : Neurosis
- NA : Not available

33% women 20-29 years old did not talk with their families and felt that they were not understood by their families (Table 3-6,7). Many of the elderly women said that they had various worries about their families (Table 3-8). Expressions of "worry" in this questionnaire included concerns about health conditions, illness, income, job, friends and others, but were not clearly expressed.

1. Results of the Cornell Medical Index (CMI)

Table 4 shows the average CMI scores by the age of the women. The highest scores indicating physical symptoms were found in the groups of the 20-29-year-old, and the lowest was for the group of 40-49-year-old. The highest scores indicating mental symptoms were also for the 14-19-year-old group, and the lowest was for the group of 60-84 years old. For the physical symptoms, the 14-19-year-old women showed high scores for complaints on respiratory organs and exhaustion, the 20-29-year-old women had complaints about digestive organs, skin, nervous systems, urinary and genital organs, and the 50-59-year-old women showed high scores for complaints about cardiovascular events, muscle and skeletal organs, past disease and habits. Low scores on almost all items were found for the groups of 40-49 and 60-84 year old. For the mental symptoms, 14-19-year-old women showed the highest scores on all items except depression, while the 50-59-year-old women showed the highest scores for depression.

Table 5 shows the number and percentage of CMI score classification depending on the age of women. In the IIIrd and IVth stages of classification higher

percentages were noticed in 14-19, 20-29 and 50-59 years old, and much lower percentages for the 30-39 and 40-49 years old women. None of the women aged 60-84 years old were in the IIIrd or IVth stages.

2. Results of the Simplified Menopause Index (SMI)

Table 6 shows the SMI average scores in relation to the age of the women. The highest total score was found for the group of 14-19-year-old, and the lowest for the 40-49-year-old subjects. The highest scores were found for 14-19-year-old women for all items except insomnia, frequent urination/leaking of urine, and pains during sexual intercourse. The highest insomnia score was for those 60-84 years old, that of frequent urination/leaking of urine for those 50-59 years old, and the highest score for pains during sexual intercourse for those 20-29 and 30-39 years old.

Table 7 shows the number and percentage of SMI score classification in relation to the age of the women. Medical treatment is recommended to women over 51 points in standard of SMI score. In the group of 14-19 years old women the score over 51 points was observed most frequently. The only group scoring above 91 points was 14-19 years old women.

Discussion

Unidentified complaints were defined as "varied and vague symptoms," and "no medical findings in their body organs" (Tsutsui, 1998). The present survey included CMI and SMI in order to examine the expression of unidentified complaints of normal healthy women who were not outpatients or inpatients of

Table 6 SMI average score depending on age

Item	Age	Average score (SD)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
1 Hot flash		3.2 (2.84)	1.0 (1.96)	1.2 (2.10)	1.1 (2.16)	0.8 (1.99)	1.1 (1.55)
2 Perspiration		3.4 (3.33)	1.7 (2.28)	3.1 (3.38)	<i>1.2</i> (2.32)	2.5 (3.38)	1.5 (2.67)
3 Chilliness		8.7 (5.14)	7.6 (4.76)	7.9 (2.92)	4.6 (4.96)	3.7 (4.54)	4.4 (4.21)
4 Shortness of breath, Palpitation		3.6 (4.14)	2.0 (3.28)	<i>1.2</i> (1.93)	2.0 (3.15)	2.7 (3.65)	2.0 (4.28)
5 Insomnia		4.5 (4.94)	2.4 (4.11)	3.4 (4.48)	<i>1.9</i> (3.18)	3.8 (5.14)	6.4 (3.25)
6 Irritability		4.9 (4.07)	4.4 (4.58)	3.6 (4.40)	3.1 (3.51)	2.8 (3.03)	2.5 (2.98)
7 Melancholy		3.2 (2.96)	2.4 (2.64)	<i>1.1</i> (1.85)	2.0 (2.25)	2.6 (2.25)	2.8 (1.91)
8 Headache, Dizziness, Nausea		1.9 (2.47)	1.1 (2.15)	1.3 (2.36)	1.5 (2.29)	<i>1.0</i> (1.78)	<i>1.0</i> (1.93)
9 Exhaustion		3.8 (2.63)	3.3 (2.36)	3.5 (2.59)	3.0 (2.24)	2.7 (2.32)	2.0 (1.85)
10 Stiff shoulders, Lumbago		3.8 (2.93)	3.2 (2.83)	3.3 (2.71)	3.7 (2.51)	3.3 (2.37)	3.1 (3.00)
11 Frequent urination, Leaking of urine		1.1 (2.32)	0.4 (1.26)	0.3 (0.95)	1.4 (2.14)	2.2 (2.49)	1.5 (2.27)
12 Pains during sexual intercourse		0.2 (1.27)	0.6 (2.08)	0.6 (1.26)	0.2 (0.74)	0.4 (0.98)	0.4 (10.6)
Total score		42.4 (23.34)	29.4 (16.84)	30.5 (15.35)	25.7 (17.23)	28.7 (20.93)	28.7 (21.03)

<Footnotes>

- 1) Bold type indicates the highest score among age groups.
- 2) Italic type indicates the lowest score among age groups.

Table 7 SMI score classification depending on age

Classification	Age	Number (%)					
		14-19 n=67	20-29 n=33	30-39 n=10	40-49 n=62	50-59 n=36	60-84 n=8
0~25		19 (28.4)	14 (42.4)	5 (50.0)	36 (58.1)	18 (50.0)	3 (37.5)
26~50		26 (38.8)	14 (42.4)	4 (40.0)	22 (35.5)	13 (36.1)	4 (50.0)
51~70		13 (19.4)	4 (12.1)	1 (10.0)	3 (4.8)	1 (2.7)	1 (12.5)
71~90		7 (10.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	3 (8.3)	0 (0.0)
over 91		2 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
NA		0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.7)	0 (0.0)

<Standard of SMI score classification>

- 0~25 : No problem
- 26~50 : Improvement of dietary life and more physical exercise
- 51~70 : Necessity of healthy living guidance, counseling and medical treatment as an outpatient
- 71~90 : Necessity of long-term medical treatment
- over 91 : Necessity of thorough examination by medical department and long-term treatment
- NA : Not available

medical facilities. The subjective symptoms expressed in the survey questionnaires were not medically examined. As most were not serious objectively, they were considered as "unidentified complaints."

1. Psychological characteristics by Cornell Medical Index (CMI)

The CMI data, which present psychological characteristics, suggest that there are two unstable periods of psychological conditions in young and middle-aged women (Table 5). Adolescence is generally considered

to be a period of extreme instability, called a crisis of mentality, with the rapid development of puberty. Women in this survey seem to be in a stage of mental crisis until their twenties, possibly due to their stressful social environment.

Women at the climacteric stage also tend to display mental instability. The principal causes may be the loss of reproductive function and anxiety about aging. They feel estrangement and loneliness in the family, and thus sometimes become depressed. In this survey, although women aged 40-49 and 50-59 years old showed similar tendencies for their relationships with friends and family members (Table 3-2, 6, 7, 8), the psychological condition of 40-49-year-old women was stable but that of 50-59-year-old women was not (Table 5).

2. Characteristics of unidentified complaints

Unidentified complaints have been thought to be specific for women in the climacteric stage, but are now thought to be symptoms expressed not only by women of all age but also by men. The results of this survey suggested that young women had various strong symptoms, while middle age women at the stage of menopause showed fewer symptoms and their health condition was more stable than those of younger women (Table 6, 7). Young women showed the highest SMI values, suggesting that adolescence women's hormonal conditions are as unstable as those of women at the climacteric stage. Therefore, SMI could be an effective measure for unidentified complaints not only for women at the climacteric stage but also for adolescence women.

If one checks the characteristics of unidentified complaints by analysis of low rank items of the CMI, the 14-19-year-old women had strong symptoms of respiratory, urinary/genital systems and exhaustion, while the 20-29-year-old women had strong symptoms of digestive organs, skin, nervous and urinary/genital systems (Table 4).

A survey on unidentified complaints in female adolescence by Tamada (1998) indicated that there were 5 respiratory system-related items and 5 items related to urinary/genital organs, skin and exhaustion among the 20 items ranking highly for appearance

frequency. As symptoms of the respiratory organs and exhaustion are easily influenced by daily health care, we must consider women's daily lifestyles when we examine unidentified complaints. In the present survey, young women showed strong symptoms of urinary/genital organs, indicating high sexual activity among young women (Table 4). Middle-aged and elderly women showed strong cardiovascular, muscle/skeletal and eyes/ear symptoms, possibly due to aging (Table 4).

3. Changes in physical symptoms with time

Lock (1988, 1993) found that Japanese women showed less menopause symptoms than North American women. She attributed this difference to social-cultural differences between the two nations. Her reports implied that Japanese women had more patience than American women and there was a Japanese tradition that menopause symptoms were "zeitakubyo (luxury illness)." Thus, Japanese researchers were highly concerned about the possibility that women felt the need to endure the symptoms and did not consult doctors, resulting in delay in the discovery of illness. The results of this survey suggested a generation difference in complaints of physical symptoms with age. Young women are thought not to display patience with their physical symptoms in comparison with elderly women. They do not consider endurance as a virtue and express their feelings outright.

An interesting result from this survey is that middle-aged and elderly women display more stable physical health conditions than the younger women. One of the factors leading to this difference may be their job situation. Over 70% of the older women worked full-time or part-time (Table 2-1), and the satisfaction from this may lead to their more stable physical health condition. Thus, having a job may contribute to the overall wellness of women. Similar studies should be carried out with women who are not working outside the home and also with men.

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