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Q5(d)

Menopause and its impact.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · Relevance of menarche, menopause and other bioevents to fertility. Fertility patterns and differentials.

11.1 Relevance of menarche, menopause and other bioevents to fertility. Fertility patterns and differentials.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on Menopause and its impact
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Menopause is the permanent end of menses after follicular depletion.

Oestrogen fall drives flush, bone, and some heart risk.

Hawkes' grandmother hypothesis reads long post-reproductive life as adaptive.

Social impact includes household role and care work.

Treat complications, not the event itself as a disease.

Introduction

Menopause is the lasting end of menstruation, usually near fifty years. It is a human life-history event with somatic and social impact.

Body**Biology**

- Ovarian follicles are depleted. Oestrogen falls. Cycles stop after twelve months without menses.
- Hot flushes, bone loss, and a rise in some cardiovascular risk follow in many women.
- **Grandmother hypothesis** work by **Hawkes** treats post-reproductive life as an evolved helping stage, not a defect.

Impact

- In India, menopause can shift household rank, diet taboos, and labour, as medical-anthropology studies of midlife show.
- **HRT** is a clinical option with trade-offs. Anthropology also records herbal and kin support.
- It is not a disease by definition. Pathology is **osteoporosis**, depression, or untreated bleeding, not the fact of stopping.

Flow diagram

Menopause -> Oestrogen fall
Oestrogen fall -> Bone flush heart
Menopause -> Grandmother helping

Conclusion

Menopause ends fertility and changes the endocrine profile. Impact is bone, heart, mood, and household role, with grandmothering as an evolutionary reading.

Facts & figures

Twelve-month rule

Clinical menopause is twelve months of amenorrhoea without other cause.

Hawkes

Hadza work linked grandmothers' foraging to grandchild survival.

Osteoporosis

Post-menopausal bone loss is a major public-health impact.

HRT

Hormone therapy can ease vasomotor symptoms; risk-benefit is individual.