

AFRICAN WOMEN EXPERIENCING PERIMENOPAUSE: MEMORY LOSS

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This paper focuses on women in the poorer nations, such as in Africa, who experience perimenopause and are coping with symptoms associated with perimenopause. Memory loss is a symptom associated with perimenopause, a state of health that involves hormonal changes affecting women between the ages of 20-45 (“Perimenopause Symptoms,” n.d.). Memory loss (amnesia, brain fog) involves forgetfulness or the inability to recall certain situations or events (National Institute of Health [NIH], 2014). The association of memory loss experienced by African women who cultivate the lands to the ability to recall and discern fables of which stories focus on natural processes will be further explored as healing approaches aimed to assist women who experience memory loss.

Memory Loss Contributors

Beliefs are stored in long-term memory whereby information can be recalled to our short-term memory whereby beliefs then influence actions (Cherniak, 1983). With constructive memory, experiences are integrated with other stored long-term memories, whereas with semantic memory, facts and knowledge are stored in the long-term memory (Cherniak, 1983). When women undergo premenopausal and perimenopausal transitions, processing speed, verbal memory, and working memory may decline for a limited duration (Greendale et al., 2009).

Normal memory loss has been associated with the aging process (New York-Presbyterian Hospital, 2006). Reversible short-term memory loss, however, is a condition that has been associated with poor nutrition and a deficiency in Vitamin B₁₂, which nourishes the nervous system (New York-Presbyterian Hospital, 2006; Singh & Sachan, 2011). Chronic stress from working in the heat, such as harvesting wheat, has been reported to lead to forgetfulness,

memory loss, or difficulty concentrating, which are signs of a heat stroke (Lugo-Amador, Rothenhaus, & Moyer, 2004).

Air pollution has been reported to cause memory loss in U.S. citizens (Pittman, 2012). The air, marine, and ground pollution in certain areas of Africa are prevalent and have led to the contamination of the water supply impacting 41% of the population (Lewis, n.d.). The nitrogen oxide emission risk in Africa has been low for decades, and the medium to high nitrogen oxide emission exposure to the ozone and crops, such as wheat, in developing nations will propose a greater risk by 2025 (Marshall, Ashmore, & Hinchcliffe, 1997). Many premenopausal women in Africa who do not have proper access to sanitary water and land to grow uncontaminated foods, thus, may experience prolonged memory loss (Doss, 1999; Lewis, n.d.).

Suggestions Associated with Memory Loss

Women who believe their condition results from a medical disease are recommended to see a medical doctor (MD) and naturopathic doctor (ND). Natural techniques discussed in this paper aim to enlighten women on lifestyles and healthy living. Individuals taking medications for memory loss, however, should consider consulting a doctor prior to taking supplements, as supplements, or a combination of supplements with medications, may cause harmful side effects when taken with medications (Nihira, 2012). The following suggestions aim to help women who experience memory loss and are not aimed to diagnose, prescribe, treat, or cure.

Memory loss associated with a deficiency in Vitamin B₁₂ has been approached consuming pills or injections (Singh & Sachan, 2011). Researchers may consider researching the extent whereby folate acid (B₉) is effective in treating memory loss associated with perimenopause. Folate acid, which is stored in wheat, when metabolized with B₁₂ tends to

nourish healthy red blood cells reducing the chances of acquiring amnesia (Breining Institute, 2002; “Florida Folic Acid Coalition,” 2012).

A male from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu (India) shared in regards to mid-aged women experiencing memory loss or foggy thinking, women are unaware of their health concerns; gold and money attract more than health; there are so many women who don’t even have a comprehensive health plan; they use money [given to them by their husband] to buy gold, primarily gold, that’s all; they always thinking of the future and forget the present. (P. Albert, social media communication, January 20, 2014)

Reflecting on the Midas touch whereby the desire for gold impeded the king’s natural consumption process, the laying on of hands, which is a natural spiritual technique that involves placing hands on ill individuals, might have been more appropriate for the king to approach an underlining need (King Midas, n.d.; Wimberley, n.d.). The Midas touch unlike the laying of hands represents greed, using the hands to transform items into gold. The King’s desire for expedite wealth impeded his natural consumption process because foods transformed into gold could not be metabolized by the body (“King Midas,” n.d.). When awakened, the King Midas (n.d.) found a better treasure than gold ~ herbs in his garden. Using the hands to cultivate the land continues to be a successful technique, that is, for growing wheat. Recalling the fable, the Little Red Hen cultivated the lands and was able to enjoy bread made from the harvested wheat (Evans, 2008).

The development of wheat in underdeveloped countries organized by representatives of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) headquartered Lebanon and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) headquartered in Mexico have been successful (M’mboyi, Njau, Olembo, Kinyua, & Malinga, 2010). Most

married African women farmers have access to the lands because of male ties and are considered human capital in regards to cultivating the lands (Doss, 1999). If the agencies further assist by controlling pollution, more women may have access to assist with cultivating the wheat (Doss, 1999; Lewis, n.d.; M'mboyi, 2010; Marshall et al., 1997). Single women, who have never been married, however, may continue to find more difficulties accessing the land because of the lack of formal titles (Doss, 1999).

Wheat, which stores folic acid as well as gluten (protein), has been used to make flour and noodles (German Spaetzle/egg noodles; "Florida Folic Acid Coalition," 2012; Maningat & Hesser, 1994). Indomie, an instant noodle, is captured by 70% of the Nigerian markets whereby nearly 151 million citizens depend on food security (Hatch, Becker, & van Zyl, 2011).

Dampfnudel is another German dish comprised of flour or steamed noodles that may delight women experiencing memory loss. Using the hands to prepare breads and noodle dishes, thus, may be economical feasible for citizens of developing nations (Ray, 2012). While eating, "Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body'" (Mathew 26:26).

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