MENOPAUSE AND DEPRESSION: OUR EXPERIENCE

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Introduction
Perimenopause is a period of heightened risk for depressive symptoms as well as clinical and subclinical depressive disorders. Vulnerability to depression during the perimenopause can be attributed to a number of factors, including discomfort from somatic symptoms associated with the transition (particularly vasomotor symptoms), psychosocial stress, inadequate social support, health behaviors, lifestyle, sociodemographic characteristics and history of clinical depression.
The altered estrogen and progesterone milieu contribute to the risk for depression at this time although the data supporting this are largely indirect and sparse.

Methods
We enrolled 161 consecutives women by more than 18 years and that gave informed consent, attending to Clinic of Gynecology and Obstetrics of Udine's "Azienda Ospedaliero-Universitaria S.Maria della Misericordia" during the period from February to September 2011. We collected informations about socio-demographical characteristics, age of the last menstrual cycle, number of pregnancies, habits and lifestyle (BMI, smoking, consumption of alcohol, coffee), medical history, use of medications. Then we administered their questionnaires to investigate depressive symptoms (with Beck Depression Inventory). BDI consists of 21 questions about how the subject was feeling in the last week. Each set of four possible answer choices range in increasing intensity. When the test is scored, a value of 0 to 3 is assigned for each answer and then the total score is compared to a key to determine the depression's severity. The standard cut-offs are as follows: 0-9 indicates that a person is not depressed, 10-18 indicates mild-moderate depression, 19-29 indicates moderate-severe depression and 30-63 signifies indicates severe depression. Finally we divided the population in three groups (climacteric, menopause from less than 5 years and menopause by more than 5 years).

Results
BDI values in the three groups are: 12,4 in women in climacteric period, 10,9 in women in menopause less than 5 years and 10,4 in women in menopause more than 5 years.

Conclusions
Our data indicate that our women have mild-moderate depression, and the years of transition are a high risk period for depressive symptoms. These findings could correlate with hormones levels fluctuations that we have before the last menstrual period, when women are more vulnerable.