

Menopause or climacteric, just a semantic discussion or has it clinical implications?

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Climacteric and menopause are two terms that are indistinctly used to name clinical expected events related to the decline in ovarian function. Thus, in the literature and in clinical settings we read and hear 'menopausal symptoms' or 'climacterics symptoms'. Globally, the term menopause is much more frequently used than climacteric but, before we use either one, we should consider that 'menopause' is referring to a specific event, the cessation of menses, and 'climacteric' to gradual changes of ovarian function that start before the menopause and continue thereafter for a while. In the premenopause period, hormonal changes will take place that are associated with symptoms, which deteriorate the quality of life, and with metabolic changes which increase the risk of chronic diseases. Therefore, the word climacteric ('steps' in Greek) seems more adequate to refer to the symptoms and chronic diseases associated with the gradual decrease of ovarian function, and we should leave the term 'm