

# Menopause TLI. Too Little Information.

The global conversation deficit

In a world of **TMI**,  
why is this one  
natural topic still **TLI**?



**AVON**  
#avonTLI

adapt

A global study by **Avon**, into the experiences and attitudes of **perimenopausal and menopausal women**

# Foreword



**Gina Ghura**  
Executive Director of Innovation, Avon Worldwide

Menopause.

We know the word.

We know the basic biology – our periods stop!

And we know about hot flushes!

But do we know enough? Do we understand the phases – and that menopause is actually the end of the journey, but perimenopause is the time we start to experience symptoms? Do we share our experience? Do we speak up and get the support we need?

No, we don't.

There is no shame in being a woman and embarrassment is being stripped from topics like feminine care, menstruation, pregnancy, and breast feeding. Yet menopause still eludes conversation.

**48%** of women across the world were unaware of perimenopause

**43%** did not expect perimenopause to start when it did

Given this happens to all women, I found these statistics shocking. Yet I identify. I too felt unprepared for those first symptoms. Just a few years after having my third child I was told I was perimenopausal. WHAT? It felt like just a minute ago I'd been pregnant. Surely I was too young. I felt too young.

**At Avon we believe in the power of 'speaking up'.**

We believe that by sharing stories and experiences we can affect genuine change for good.

- We have invested millions in supporting women to speak up against Domestic Violence.
- For 20 years we have helped normalise the conversation around breast cancer, helping women spot changes that could be the life-saving early indicator of the illness.
- For 135 years we have supported women to speak up about their right to earn and enable them to have that freedom.

We have spent years in laboratories researching the impact of hormones on our skin. And when looking specifically at the impact of menopause and perimenopause we realised that it was a massively under discussed topic. Put simply women didn't realise why their skin was changing or how to manage those fluctuations and changes. And if they didn't understand from a skincare perspective, what else didn't they understand?

In a world of social sharing, where the fabric of our lives is posted – from our breakfasts to our baby scan images, our fears, our failures, our hopes our dreams - this is one of the stories of women's lives that remains untold.

There's little conversation, little celebration, few public role models and therefore little understanding.

**In a world of TMI – too much information – Menopause is still TLI**

That is why we undertook this research. **We spoke to hundreds of women across the globe** to gain quantitative understanding of the realities. When symptoms start v. expectations; the physical symptoms; the emotional impact; who women are speaking to; where they go to get information and the barriers they face. We also spoke to our wider community of women, who shared their personal experiences and stories.

To help gain perspective on the data we shared our findings with GP and women's health specialist **Dr Sarah Jarvis**, who has given us invaluable advice and responses to some of the issues raised.

We believe as an accessible beauty brand we can **help ease some of the physical symptoms with innovative new product development**. We also hope to begin to break the silence. With our 5 million Avon representatives worldwide we believe we can start to normalise the conversation.

**LET'S START TO SPEAK UP ABOUT MENOPAUSE AND PERIMENOPAUSE**  
and help women through this time of great change.



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# The Cycle of Change.

## Peri – What?



“Menopause is a commonly understood term, but the preceding process, the perimenopausal phase, is far less understood. Officially you reach the menopause when you have your last period. But the perimenopause, leading up to your final period, can last anywhere from a few months to 4 years.

I see that in my surgery all the time, and these findings demonstrate that this is a truly global information gap.”

Dr Sarah Jarvis

### The cycle explained

Menopause refers to when your body has stopped ovulating. The average age of menopause is 51 ½ years old, but doctors consider it normal to go through the menopause any time from age 45. An early menopause is between 40 and 45 years old, while going through menopause before the age of 40 is described as premature menopause.

Although you officially reach the menopause when you’ve had your last period, you won’t know at the time that you’ll never have another one. Doctors don’t say that period was definitely your last until a year since you last menstruated.

However the perimenopause stage is the process leading up to that change as your body starts to undergo the huge changes to your hormonal balance.

At this time women start to experience many initial symptoms, and this is often much earlier than they expect. They are not yet ‘menopausal age’ and still have periods, albeit often erratic, so are often to surprised to find perimenopause is the cause.

In the years leading up to the perimenopause, the number of follicles (eggs) starts to dwindle. The female hormones produced by your ovary play a major part in controlling the natural ebb and flow of hormones that results in periods.

By the time most women get irregular symptoms, the number of eggs has dropped dramatically. This means you’re less likely to become pregnant – although there is still a chance, so it’s essential to keep using contraception.

Between 3 and 7 in 10 women get hot flushes in the early perimenopause. Unfortunately, the longer the time between getting these hot flushes and your last period, the longer they’re likely to last. While in the past, doctors used to tell women hot flushes lasted a couple of years, we now know it’s not unusual to have them for a decade and the average is about 7 years.

Hot flushes and night sweats also increase the chance of sleep disturbance. However, many women find their sleep pattern changing in their 40s even if they haven’t developed hot flushes.

“When menopause came things became a bit better as the irregular periods were a worry. I did not feel so flushed and sweaty.”

Fatima, India

“All the symptoms become more intensified, everything got worse, overnight.”

Emily, South Africa

“But I’m too young for the menopause?”

Lauren, UK

48%

were unaware of perimenopause, until they started to have symptoms



While women in Poland, India and Russia were largely more aware



Nearly 6 out of 10 women in the UK were not expecting the perimenopause when it started



For half of women in South Africa and almost as many in Brazil and Mexico this was also the case



43%

did not expect perimenopause

when it started, and this figure is even higher amongst UK women, with more than half (53%) being surprised when they started to experience symptoms

36%

don’t understand the two phases, perimenopause and menopause,

despite being in one of these phases

49%

of women did not feel prepared for the menopause.

Other than Poland and Russia where it’s still a third, around half of the female population feel unprepared for this naturally occurring change





Dr Sarah Jarvis

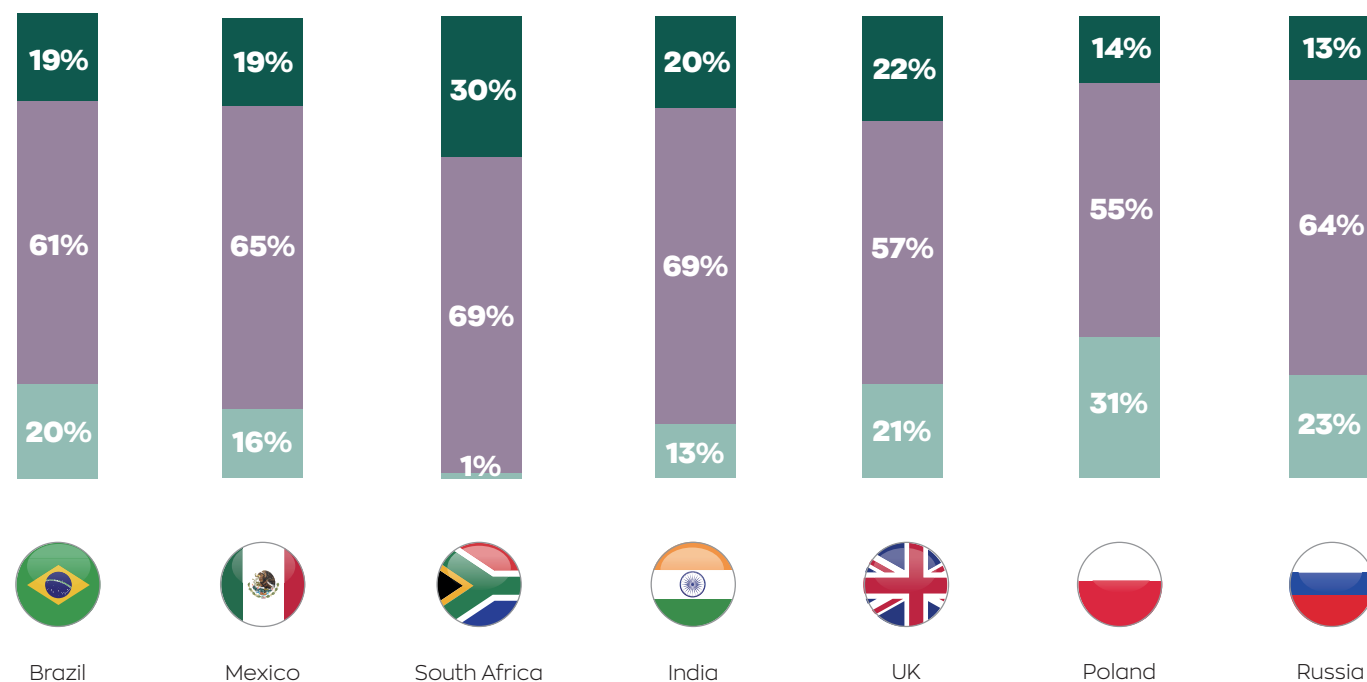
“As the data reflects, the perimenopausal phase lasts between 3 and 5 years, but for most it is closer to 5 years. Although there is a lot of variability, the average age of menopause is about 51 years old. That means that for the majority of women, perimenopause is experienced from the age of around 45 years old.

For about 20% of the population it can be younger, and for about 20% it can be later... There is no specific reason why perimenopause tends to last longer – genetics plays a huge part but studies have suggested lifestyle and general health can play a part.

Most women have heard that the menopause can lead to hot flushes, night sweats and vaginal dryness. But they have no idea symptoms can start years before their last period; and very few are aware of other symptoms like night sweats, mood changes, problems concentrating, tiredness and changes to skin and hair.”

#### At what age did you realize you were going through perimenopause?

■ Under 45 y.o. ■ 45-50 y.o. ■ 51 y.o. +



“My husband didn’t believe in me and the hormonal changes are horrible. I have gained a lot of weight.”

Verónica, Mexico

#### How long did perimenopause last?



There is not a specific reason why perimenopause tends to last longer but genetics, lifestyle, general health, and cultural perspective are elements that impact women who experience it.



# Emotionally Charged



“The reason women really need to understand the symptoms of the perimenopause phase is because the hormonal changes can affect mood significantly. This can be a time of anguish for many. As many as 3 in 10 women also experience memory problems, which can cause enormous anxiety as well as affecting self-esteem and day-to-day activities.

Knowing that mood can be so severely affected by the change in hormones is essential to help women navigate this time. I've seen so many women in my surgery thinking they've fallen out of love with their husbands because they no longer want to have sex or feel irritated all the time. I've seen women come in asking for anti-depressants without ever considering these changes to their emotional well-being could be a result of hormonal surges and the perimenopause.”








Dr Sarah Jarvis

Globally 44% of women said they felt anxious during perimenopause. A figure which leapt to nearly three quarters of for Indian women feeling (71%) and more than half of Polish women (56%) also feeling that way.

“I always thought it wasn't true. I feel a lot of headaches, the redness on my face stings and worst of all I am depressed. It seems every day I feel insecure.”

Ana, Brazil

## The main emotions women felt during perimenopause...

	Anxious 48%	Anxious 32%	Unsure 32%	Anxious 44%	Unsure 45%	Anxious 58%	Anxious 71%
1st							
2nd	Unsure 33%	Confused 25%	Anxious 26%	Confused 34%	Anxious 34%	Educated 42%	Unsure 39%
3rd	Scared 25%	Embarrassed 22%	Confused 24%	Unsure 29%	Not Informed 28%	Unsure 41%	Scared 22%
							
	Brazil	Mexico	South Africa	India	UK	Poland	Russia



## Laura's story

“I was in the prime of my career, I had two children under 4 and I started to feel really anxious – to doubt myself and to question my every move.

I started to experience insomnia, and my marriage started to suffer. I thought I was experiencing depression, but my doctor said it was likely down to hormone changes as I was perimenopausal. I felt there must be something wrong with me. I thought that would happen in my 50s. Not in my mid 40s. I had toddlers for heaven's sake. I started to speak to friends and realised they felt the same. I got some support – acupuncture worked for me, and I cut back on alcohol. I can see my friends struggling with anger and rage or anxiety and I suggest they go and find out if it's hormonal. Often they think they're too young too. But I can see the same is happening to them.”

# What are the Physical Symptoms?

Hot flushes and irregular periods are the main pre-known symptoms.

According to the women surveyed, hot flushes were universally the most arduous of the physical symptoms.

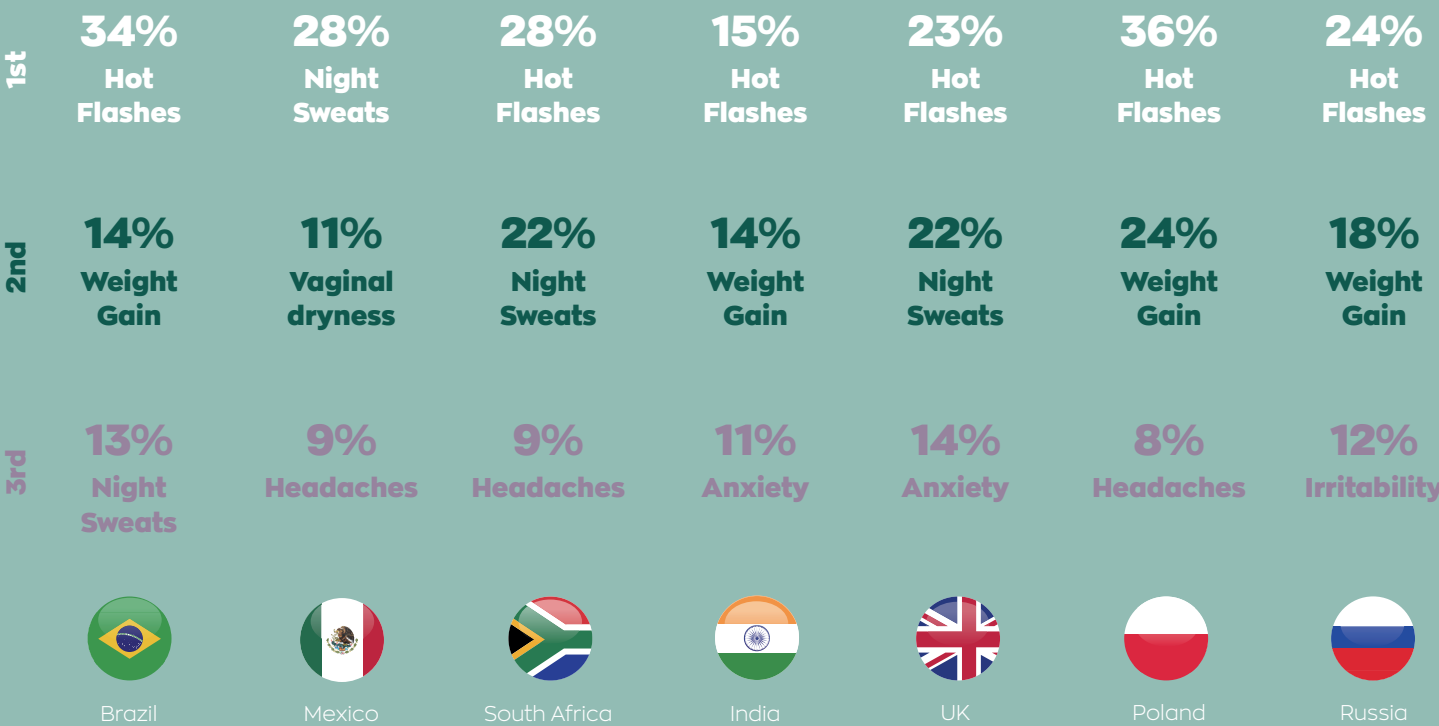
Weight gain was commonly considered a major challenge for women in Brazil, India, Poland and Russia – this is a symptom that was not expected.

Night sweats and headaches featured as another challenging symptom.

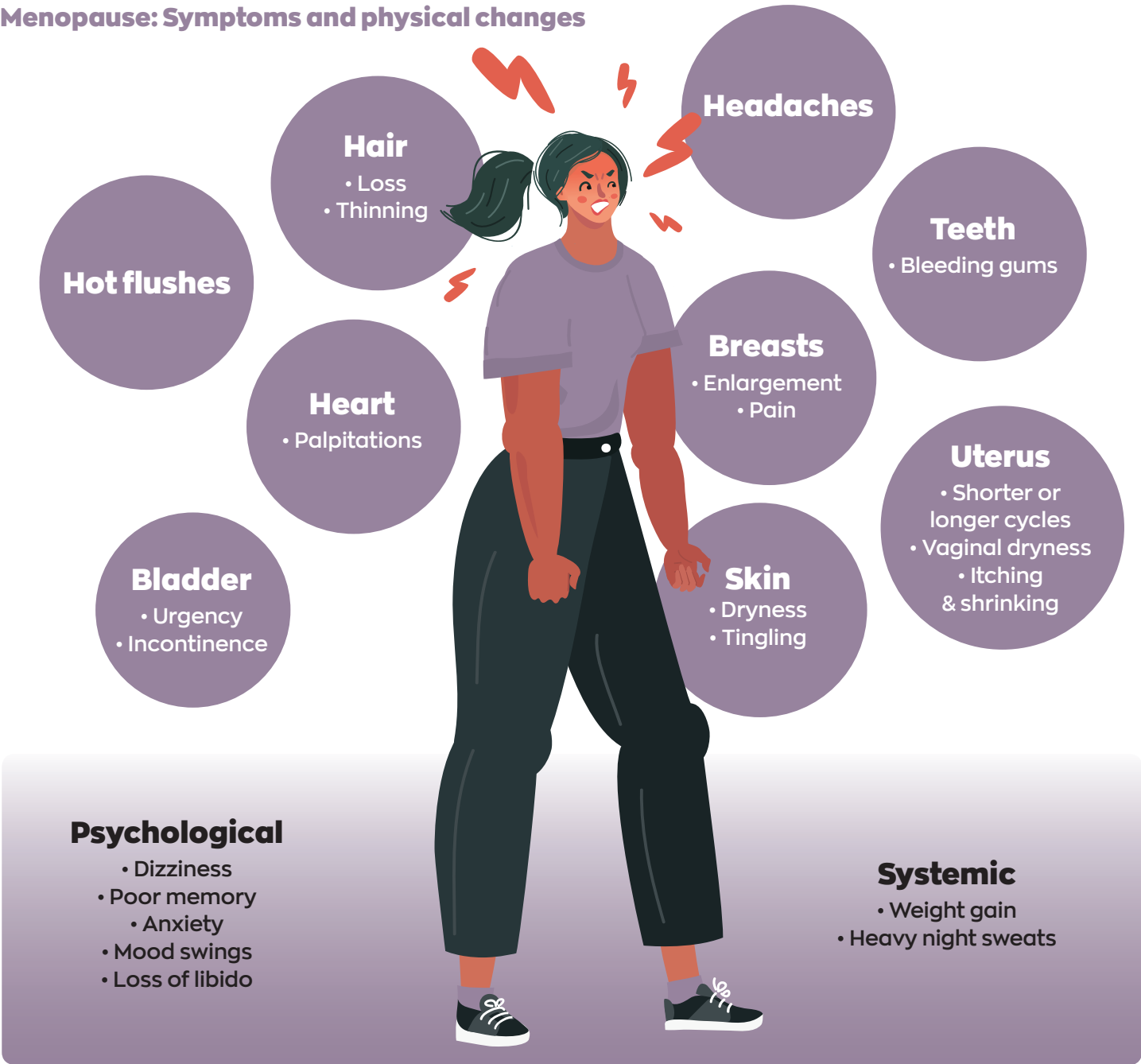
“It’s called a ‘flush, or a flash’ for a reason. And it’s a reassuring reason... hot flushes last between 60 seconds and 6 minutes. It is unpleasant. But it is temporary.”

Dr Sarah Jarvis

## The most difficult symptoms to deal with were...



## Menopause: Symptoms and physical changes



## Symptoms affect those around us too.

**30%** strongly or completely agree that their family find their symptoms overwhelming.

This further suggests we should be talking and helping our families understand why we are behaving as we are.

# TLI. TLC

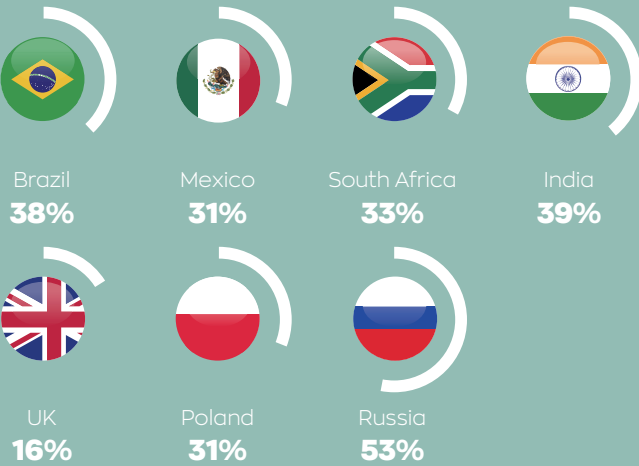
## Too Little Information, Too Little Conversation...

Regardless of race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, economic circumstances and cultural differences, women will experience the perimenopause and menopause. While each woman's experience is different, there are universal symptoms and experiences. And yet we are not talking about it – not even amongst ourselves.

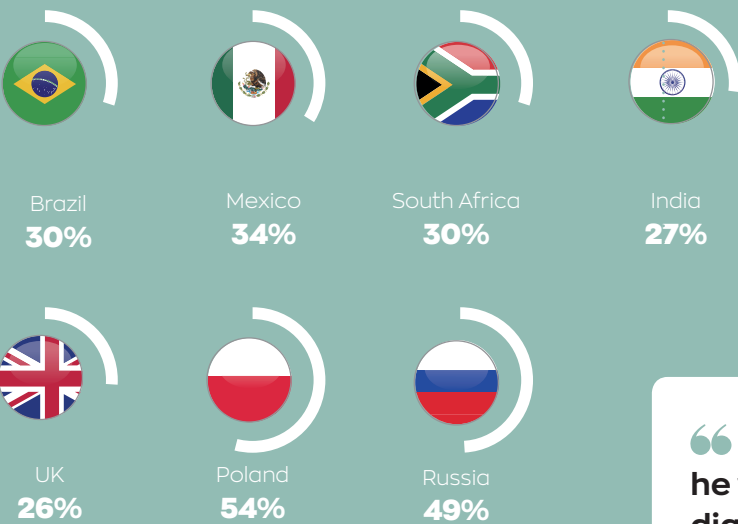
Most nationalities showed surprisingly low figures for talking about perimenopause and menopause. In Russia more than half of women are uncomfortable talking about it, while it left around a third or more women uncomfortable in Brazil, South Africa and India.

“I don't feel comfortable to talk about perimenopause or menopause”

— Agree



Many don't feel comfortable talking to partners...



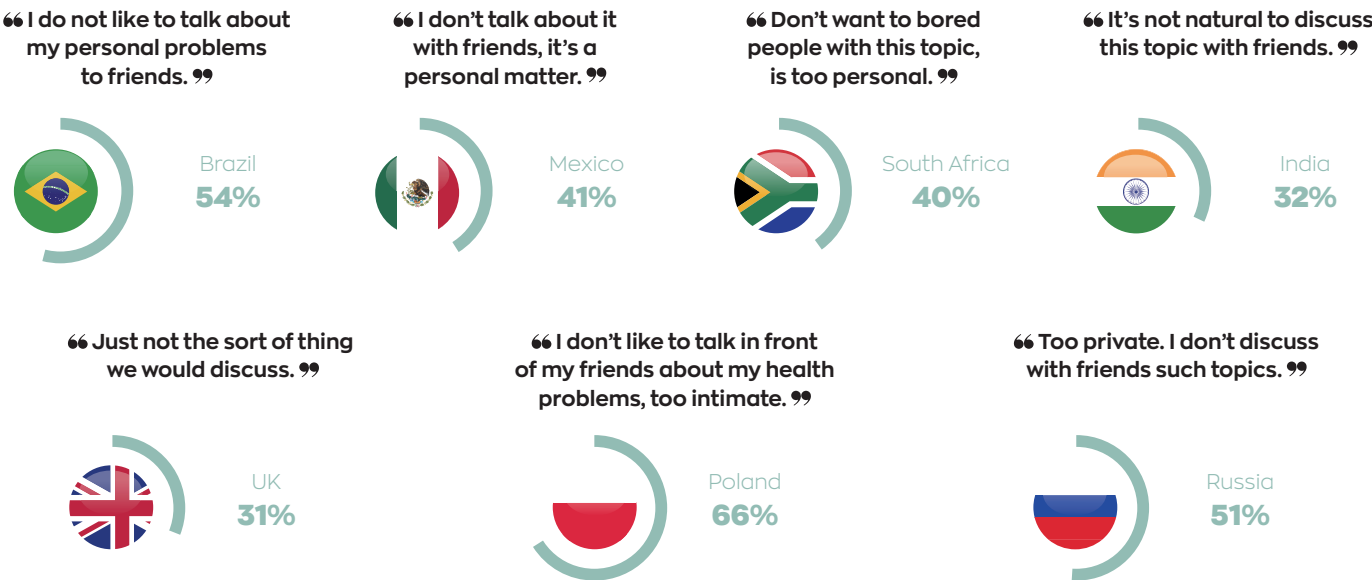
“I do not like discussing those topics with my partner.”  
Maja, Poland

“I felt I was too young and he would not agree with the diagnosis.”  
Karabo, South Africa

Interestingly many women, in all countries, said they didn't discuss with their friends because they wouldn't understand – they weren't going through it themselves... Of course, chances are they were, and just no one was speaking up!

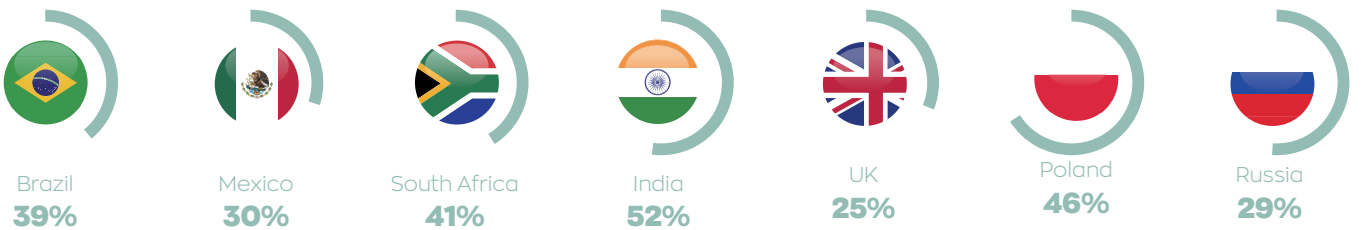
“None of them were going through it.”  
Lesedi, South Africa

% not comfortable to talk with their friends because...



A fear of ageism was a real concern for significant number of women, particularly in India and Poland.

“I did not want to tell people at work about my perimenopause/menopause for fear of ageism”





## Advice to others: “Seek Support”

**Paradoxically, and having come through menopause, women recommend others do seek out information and speak to someone trusted.**

**“Make sure you have a support network of friends.”**  
**Preeti, India**

**“ Please don’t feel that you are alone and talk to your friends - the kind of friends who you feel can understand and are knowledgeable about the menopause to help you through it. ”**

Diviya, India

**“Seek advice, talk to friends.”**  
Eleanor, UK

**“It helps to speak and share your experiences in order to inform the next person.”**

**Mary, South Africa**

## Mary, South Africa



## What advice would you give?



**“Treat it as something natural in life and get information from your doctor.”**



Brazil



**“Go to your gynaecologist and gain information.”**



Mexico



**“Get informed and speak to someone trusted that will understand.”**



South Africa



**“It is a natural condition for women. Consult a gynaecologist.”**



India



**“Read and talk about it. Accept it. Don’t suffer.”**



UK



**“Take care, read a lot about that topic. Find a good gynaecologist.”**



Poland



**“Life goes on. Find out more about menopause and visit the gynaecologist.”**



Russia

## Avon Representative, Karen's story

**“Perimenopause, what on earth, well the hormones are going nuts, the brain is going to mush, the figure is deciding as to whether or not it wants to stay the way it is, or maybe imitate Mr Stay Puft from Ghostbusters.**

You have to change the way you eat, change the way you sleep, change more or less everything to try to get through it. Then, BAM menopause comes and you thought that you had gone through it all already. Oh no, now the night sweats come. A friend's husband actually slept in the spare room, he turned over one night and she had the most massive puddle on her stomach, just through sweat. Your hormones are shot, you are advised to go onto HRT, some people do, some people don't, the emotions are rocketing, tears come, anger comes, all you want is for it to end. And it finally does. Finally you are free, free to keep calm and carry on – my friend has never felt better and I only hope that I have half the energy that she does when I'm finally out the other side.

Look after yourself, take time to have a pamper and step back from everything whenever you can – you are important at this time, remember that.”

# The Impact of Dr Google

As women are so uncomfortable discussing perimenopause and menopause, it's perhaps natural that they would turn to more 'discreet', but possibly unsubstantiated, sources of information.

In the UK women were more likely to find out information from:



And universally, 'online' was highlighted as the most popular source of information at 31%, above gynaecologists, GPs, mothers, or friends.

Online information, however, is not trusted by many women. Only 28% in India (highest rate) trust online information. Most women view it as conflicting and confusing.

Despite the age at which you start perimenopause /menopause and strength of symptoms often following maternal patterns, only 7% of women globally said their mother was the best source of advice. This was even lower in the UK where only 3% of women said their mum was the best source.



## Clare's story

“I found out at 37 I was going through the menopause. My mother then said that had happened to her too. I could not forgive her. It meant I'd lost the chance to conceive naturally. I'll never forgive my mother for not telling me her story, and giving me the information. I've no doubt I would have tried to start my family much earlier had I known.”

“I consider it to be personal.”  
Alicia, Mexico

“I did not feel like talking, my doctor is a man and he said that whatever I said and I was feeling was nothing.”  
Barbara, Brazil

“Doctor is not likeable.”  
Jhumpa, India

“Very hard to get an appointment.”  
Janine, UK

## Miriam's story:

“It's like puberty. When a child reaches puberty there are so many changes physical and emotional. We take it calmly “my little girl/or boy is all grown up and it's only natural” with a big smile on our face. Yet when ladies who are all grown up we get so emotional and anxious - looks like we are the children now. Please ladies live your life. Accept it, it is only natural. You need to sing the song “Happy Days are here again”... No more pregnancy, no more pills, no more injections, no more pads, but lots of sex.”



Dr Sarah Jarvis

“This is a time of major change in your body's biochemical make up. Your hormones are in more of a state of flux than during puberty, yet unlike during puberty you are now a grown up, juggling a job, a partner and children, who may well be hormonal teens themselves. In my experience, women have huge pressure on them and put enormous pressure on themselves to be strong. They're highly likely to be working and all too many are members of the 'squeezed middle', juggling commitments of caring for both children and elderly, frail parents. All too often this comes at a cost to themselves – time to put their own

needs first is a distant dream. I've lost count of the number of times women in the perimenopause have told me that functioning at less than 100% efficiency is just not an option.

Women of perimenopausal and menopausal age are expected to be a constant to so many others. To partners, children, colleagues, elderly parents... And yet inside we could be raging; feeling confused; sad; anxious; questioning. We can feel un-sexy and unattractive... And then we feel guilty for feeling and behaving in this strange way.

As with all mental health issues, of which anxiety or mood changes of any sort should be classed, talking about it is the first step. Knowing you are not alone, that others feel the same, that it will pass ... All of this can make a significant difference.”



# The Skinny: Menopause and its Impact on Skin

**Gina Ghura**  
Executive Director of Innovation, Avon Worldwide

“For the last two decades we’ve been researching the impact of changing hormones on skin condition.

Increased dryness and sensitivity are common in perimenopausal skin as well as that overwhelming hot sweat and redness of flashes. What really interested us was the significant loss of collagen that happens in the first 5 years of perimenopause... indeed up to 30% loss. These are all changes we noticed in-vitro and have now seen reinforced by this new research. This study also demonstrates that, for many women, finding accessible, affordable products that support these specific skin needs is currently very challenging.”

“It’s good to focus on this age, they’re not forgetting about us, we do care about looking after our skin, maybe more so than younger women”

Jana, Poland

“The worst part of menopause is that you start to visibly age, rapidly. Is there anything that can reverse it?”


Beata, UK




69%

of women had issues with **dry or sensitive skin** during menopause








Mexico presented the highest rate

 **87%** suffered with their **dry skin**

UK presents with the lowest, yet still

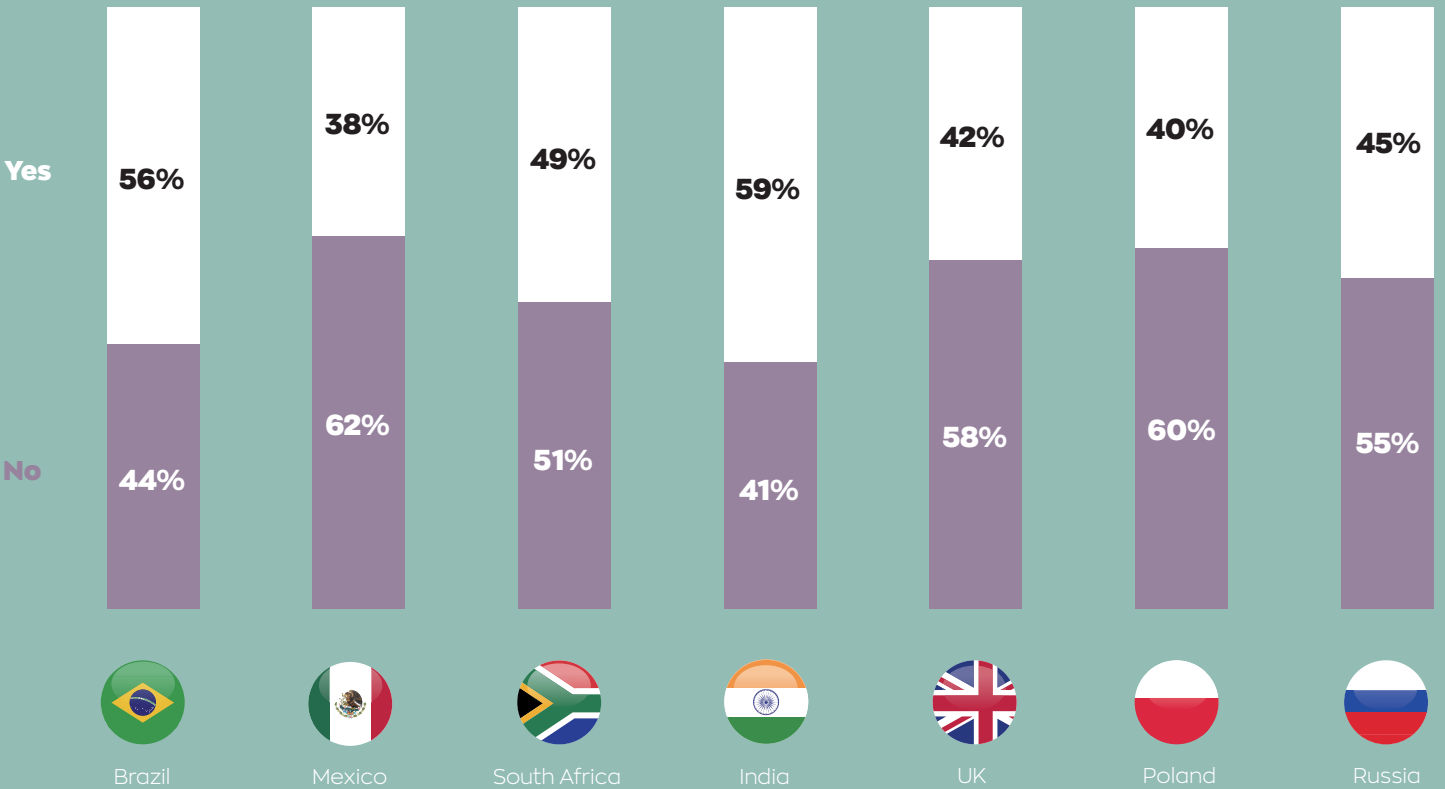
 **40%** have suffered with their **sensitive skin**

How many women have suffered with skincare symptom?

Dry Skin	74%	87%	71%	75%	67%	84%	79%
Sensitive Skin	68%	66%	67%	70%	40%	75%	66%
Blotchy Skin	50%	56%	45%	55%	37%	61%	24%
Breakouts	38%	45%	50%	53%	38%	44%	33%
							
	Brazil	Mexico	South Africa	India	UK	Poland	Russia

Most women experience multiple skin care symptoms, in particular dry and sensitive skin.

Easy to find a skin care product for your changing skin needs?





These changes to skin condition are the driving force behind our development of Avon adapt, a self-care system to help you manage fluctuations during this transition – from your skin to your mood swings, both inside and out.

Avon adapt is a range of products with innovative ingredients chosen to be effective for menopausal skin including adaptogens, derived from plant extracts, that works by “adapting” their function to bring balance and provide overall well-being.

The science that has gone into the development is truly holistic – for example our Dream Cream not only helps boosts the collagen loss experienced in perimenopause, also helps to tighten and plump sagging skin, but it also includes innovative fragrance technology.

There are many studies that show how fragrance can have a positive impact on mood, so we worked hard on our fragrance selection in all our ranges. As the name suggests our Dream Cream helps to alleviate the symptom of insomnia through a fragrance of jasmine and lavender.

Hot Flashes are one of the most common skin complaints. Our Icy Cooling Elixir Facial Mist features Tillicora, a plant native to South Asia and an exclusive Avon adaptogen, which helps cool the skin and increases hydration and firmness. Again, the fragrance too is key, helping to ‘cool’ and calm your mood, not just your skin.

Adapt Hydra Rescue on the Go Serum works to support dry skin caused by the reduction in oestrogen. The lightweight formula can be used throughout the day and over make up to boost skin moisture by 98%. Turmeric supports anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity.



Furthermore, through our community of more than 5 million representatives worldwide, we pledge to support beyond skincare. We pledge to open-up the conversation, to share our experiences and to provide support and information.

Gina Ghura  
Executive Director of Innovation, Avon Worldwide



# Change for Good....



**68% agree** they are glad they won't have to deal with **monthly periods** anymore

**46%** say menopause has made them **feel brave** and able to take on new challenges



**27%** of women globally say that since menopause they've had **the best sex of their lives**

**41% feel liberated and excited** about life

## Together we will ADAPT, and THRIVE!

This in-depth global study has certainly not revealed a sugar-coated portrayal of the menopause and perimenopuase. Far from it. It's an incredibly challenging time for women, both physically and, perhaps even more so, emotionally.

But what this study has revealed is that we can help ourselves, and future generations, by opening up, speaking up and sharing our experiences. By collectively shaking off the shame, the embarrassment, and the awkwardness that surrounds the menopause. Information and conversation help normalisation. And menopause is normal, it's natural and it will happen to 50% of the World's population.

So let's discuss those flashes, those mood swings, those sleepless nights and dry skin. Let's too share that joyful liberation from periods, that feeling of a new start, that amazing sex!

Let's sweat together, let's cry together... and then let's laugh together and let's get through it together.

Women have achieved so much. We have experienced so much and we will weather this period too. As a woman we spoke to in Brazil said so eloquently, "this is just another, among so many phases of life."

Together let's reverse this phenomenon of TLI. Let's flood our conversations and social threads with TMI. Our commitment at Avon is to do just that. **To Speak up. To talk.** Our community of representatives in 100 countries worldwide pledge to speak up about their experiences, to encourage their customers to talk about theirs, and to provide valuable information and support.

## When asked what advice you would give?

“ Take each day as it comes, eat well, exercise and enjoy not having periods anymore. ”  
Lena, UK

“ Stop thinking that it is the beginning of old age or that one no longer feels much of a “woman”, it is actually a wonderful phase! ”  
Gabriella, Mexico

“ We must feel comfortable with ourselves, there can be no pressure, we have to adapt to each stage, enjoy life... with a chocolate. ”  
Rosa, Mexico

“ Listen to your feelings and adjust/adapt to them. ”  
Nadya, Russia

# Methodology

## Sample

N= 707 completes (~100 per country)

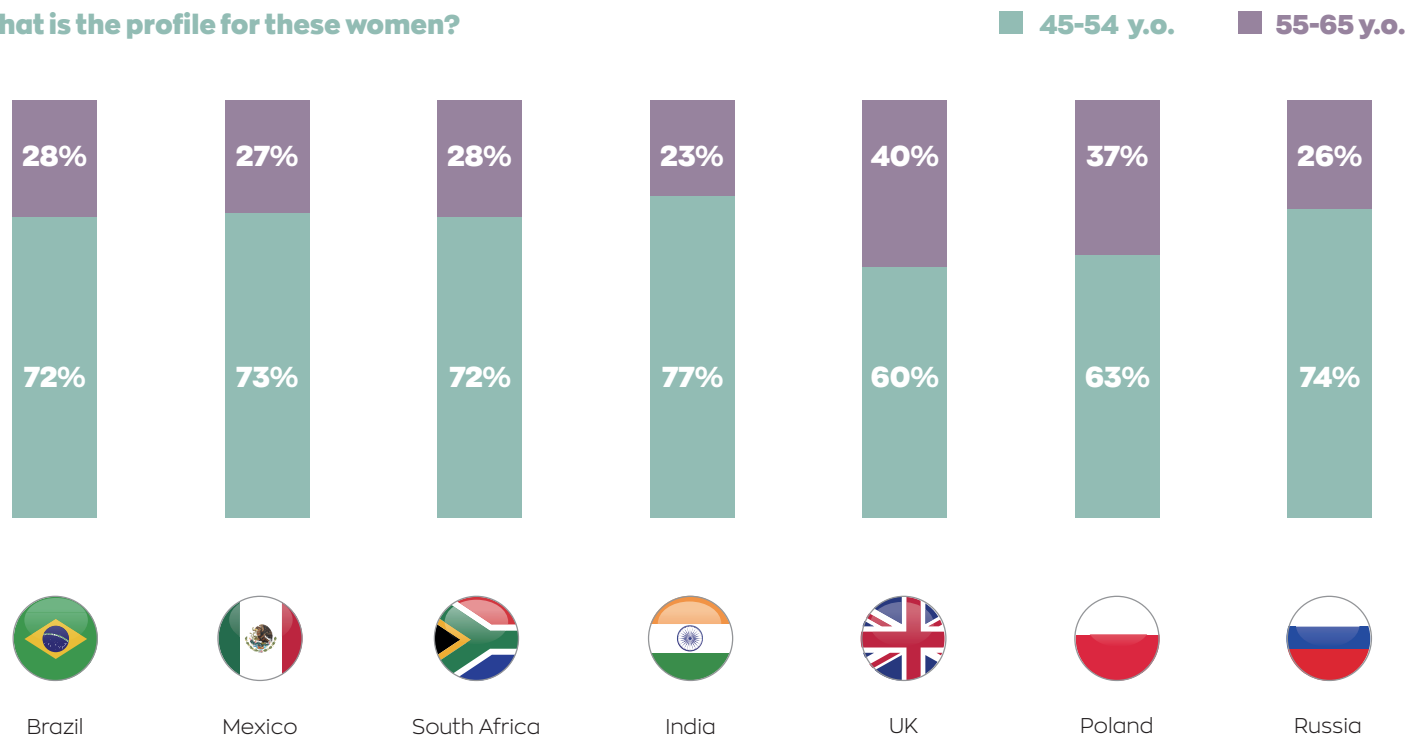
Women going through perimenopause and menopause

45-65 years old

## Fieldwork

The study was conducted with same sample size among all countries and a majority of the sample are between 45-54 years old. UK and Poland have the highest representation of older women – natural fall.

## What is the profile for these women?



## Disclaimer

All names have been changed throughout

