

## PMS/PMDD IN REAL LIFE: ITS IMPACT TO WOMEN'S QUALITY OF LIFE

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**Background:** Premenstrual disorders affect many women across different cultures worldwide. These disorders typically include a diverse spectrum of somatic and behavioural symptoms that occur during the luteal phase of a woman's menstrual cycle. Up to 85% of menstruating women report having at least one or more premenstrual symptoms. Symptoms vary considerably in severity. Symptoms range from: I) mildly discomforting; II) distressing enough to adversely affect quality of life or premenstrual syndrome (PMS); to III) severely disabling affective symptoms or premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD). Moderate to severe PMS combined with PMDD was called severe premenstrual disorder (PMD). While it is probable that the physical and emotional manifestations of severe PMD causes increased absenteeism and reduced work productivity, nevertheless the data are conflicting. Moreover, there is a paucity of multinational data documenting the impact of severe PMD on work productivity and absenteeism.

**Objective:** A large observational study was conducted to assess the impact of severe PMD on various aspects of the lives of women worldwide, including several Asian countries.

**Methods:** This cross-national, web-based prospective investigation was conducted by the Centre for Epidemiology & Health Research Berlin between June 2007 and April 2008. A population-based, stratified sample of women aged 15–45 years from 18 countries in North America (USA, Canada), Latin America (Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil), Europe (Austria, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Italy, France, UK, Poland), Asia (China, Thailand, Korea), and Australia were invited to participate in a 2-month web-based survey concerning premenstrual symptoms. The women completed, among others, the Daily Record of Severity of Problems (DRSP) (completed daily over 2 cycles), the Premenstrual Symptoms Screening Tool (PSST), and the modified Work Productivity and Activity Impairment (mWPAI) questionnaire (both completed retrospectively). The impact of premenstrual problems on daily life, work absenteeism, and productivity were assessed and compared in women with severe PMD and women with no or only mild PMS.

**Conclusions:** The results of this multinational explorative study provide sufficient evidence to suggest that moderate-to-severe PMS and PMDD is associated with increased work absenteeism and reduced work productivity. These results suggest that severe premenstrual disorder results in an economic burden both for women as well as for society. The association between the severity of PMD and the impact of life domain and work-related impairment was convincing both in China and the pooled Asia sample.

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