

## The complex journey of women living through menopause syndrome

### Problem

#### Listening to women's experience with vasomotor symptoms

Menopause is a natural event which occurs to every woman, affecting the hormonal balance in the body. In many cases, it comes with burdensome symptoms such as hot flushes, decreasing cognitive abilities etc., which may negatively impact a woman's life. While the existence of these symptoms is widely known and analyzed, their impact on women's daily lives and behaviors, as well as the emotional turmoil they trigger, are still under the radar in the public discourse. Given the context of taboo which surrounds menopause, women can feel particularly lonely, left with unpredictable, tedious symptoms and no real support or resource to understand what they go through. Our client, a leading global pharmaceutical player, asked us to shed light on the emotional patterns driven by menopause, with the final goal of knowing how they could more specifically support women with vasomotor symptoms (VMS).



### Solution

#### Collecting genuine answers

Our team has built a patient study based on our Patient Journey Mapping methodology, by giving women a voice and helping them share as freely as possible the reality of their menopause journey. For this study, Observia investigated and described moments of truth, i.e., moments when menopause symptoms have the strongest impact on women's lives. Women were recruited in 4 countries and screened to meet pre-defined criteria, which included the severity of their menopausal symptoms, notably VMS. To ensure a deep understanding of women's experiences, Observia implemented its unique in-house interview techniques, based on our internal expertise in behavioral and social sciences. These allow for a level of granularity that results in valuable, realistic, and genuine insights.

#### Three techniques were used:

- Women and healthcare professionals interviews
- Photo-elicitation methodology
- SPUR™ behavioral questionnaire

#### A few examples of women quotes from interviews:

*"Yes, I believe that it is still a bit a taboo. Less compared to some years ago, but still... Some women are ashamed, they feel bad because they believe that they are not a "woman" anymore."*

**ITALY**

*"I work in an international company and when I am leading a meeting or presenting strategic results and I have a hot flush it is hard. I live with it and suffer in silence, [...]"*

**ITALY**

*"I was so tired at work. I couldn't sleep, couldn't function. The flushes were impacting everything."*

**GERMANY**

*"I would wake up in the morning thinking : "I cannot wait to get back in bed. I was so tired and isolated all the time."*

**UK**

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## Figures

6

A 6-month project

4

countries :  
US, UK, Germany, Italy

107

interviewed women

17

interviewed HCPs

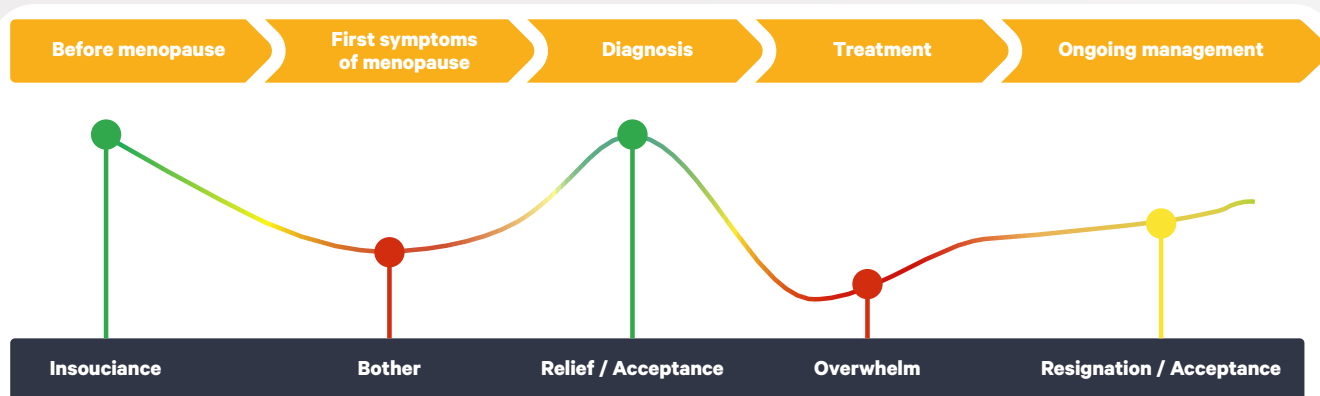
43

images sent by women  
for photo-elicitation  
interviews

## Results

SPUR™ results show that women share a similar experience across countries, with the same dimensions underlying their behaviors\*: their journey is highly influenced by their relatives and social circles (Social dimension) and by their fear of side effects induced by hormone therapy (Rational dimension). Indeed, interviews demonstrated that women would only take hormonal treatment as a last resort. Finally, the study revealed the dramatic difference of perception between women and healthcare professionals, with women still struggling even after diagnosis and treatment (as shown in graphics below), and HCPs over-looking said struggles.

### THE EXPERIENCE MAP ESTABLISHED FOR THE WHOLE WOMEN POPULATION



\*Social and Rational, part of the 4 over-arching dimensions of the SPUR model Social, Psychological, Usage and Rational

This study shows that women have a painful and complex experience both of menopause and of their care pathway, associated with trouble to express their interrogations and make themselves understood by their HCPs. These valuable insights highlight their need for support and clear and accessible information. These valuable insights highlight their need for support and clear and accessible information; and will be essentials to further build a consistent value propositions for patients. Beyond their own programs, our client plan to share these key learnings with medical committees and scientific congresses to spread awareness about women's specific experience with menopause.



16, rue Brancion 75015 Paris - France

T : +33 (0)1 81 80 24 50 - F : +33 (0)1 76 50 88 32

[www.observia-group.com](http://www.observia-group.com)

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