

# Women living with HIV are in need of adequate menopause care

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## Background

Women Living with HIV experience earlier menopause than HIV-negative women. We explored timing of menopause, quality of life, and connection to menopause/gynecological care among participants of the Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study (OCS).

## Methods

OCS is a cohort of people in HIV care with clinical and questionnaire data from 15 clinics in Ontario, Canada.

From 2021-2022, 450 women aged 30+ completed interviews including reproductive health questions.

Women are described as having experienced menopause if:

- they reported menopausal or perimenopausal status or
- reported no period for more than one year due to natural menopause.

184 women experienced natural menopause.

We defined *menopause stages* based on ages when it starts:

- 30-39 years as premature
- 40-45 years as early
- ≥45 years as normal

We examined quality of life using the Short-Form 12 Health Survey (SF-12). Descriptive statistics, t-test, and one-way ANOVA were used for statistical analysis.

## Results

Mean age(STD) for all 450 women was 47(9.4), for 184 menopausal women mean(STD) age of natural menopause start was:

- for 13.9% at premature stage it was 35.4(4.4) years old,
- for 21.4% at early menopause stage it was 43.0(1.4) years old,
- For 64.7% at normal stage it was 53.1 (3.8) years old.

We found that among 184 menopausal women 33.5% were white, 55.1% Black, 3.8% Indigenous, 7.6% other.

For the 3 groups of menopausal women the mean (STD) scores of the SF-12 scale for physical (PCS-12) scale were 49.8(9.76), 44.2(13.17), 46.6(10.36), respectively, and for mental (MCS-12) scale were 39.7(12.31), 48.0(10.58), 47.6(11.51) respectively, where lower scores indicate less quality of life. Premature menopause group had significantly lower MCS score ( $p < 0.05$ ) compared to early and normal menopause groups.

Of 450 women, 15.8% normally discussed gynecological issues with an HIV specialist, 17.8% with a gynecologist, and 54.8% with a general practitioner. Menopause was never discussed with healthcare provider by 61.3% of women.

Among *menopausal* women, 51.4% had never discussed menopause with a provider, and 30.8% think that their menopausal needs and concerns are not met.

Figure 1: Location of OCS clinics sites in Ontario (2022)



Figure 2: Mean values of SF-12 scores with 95% CI

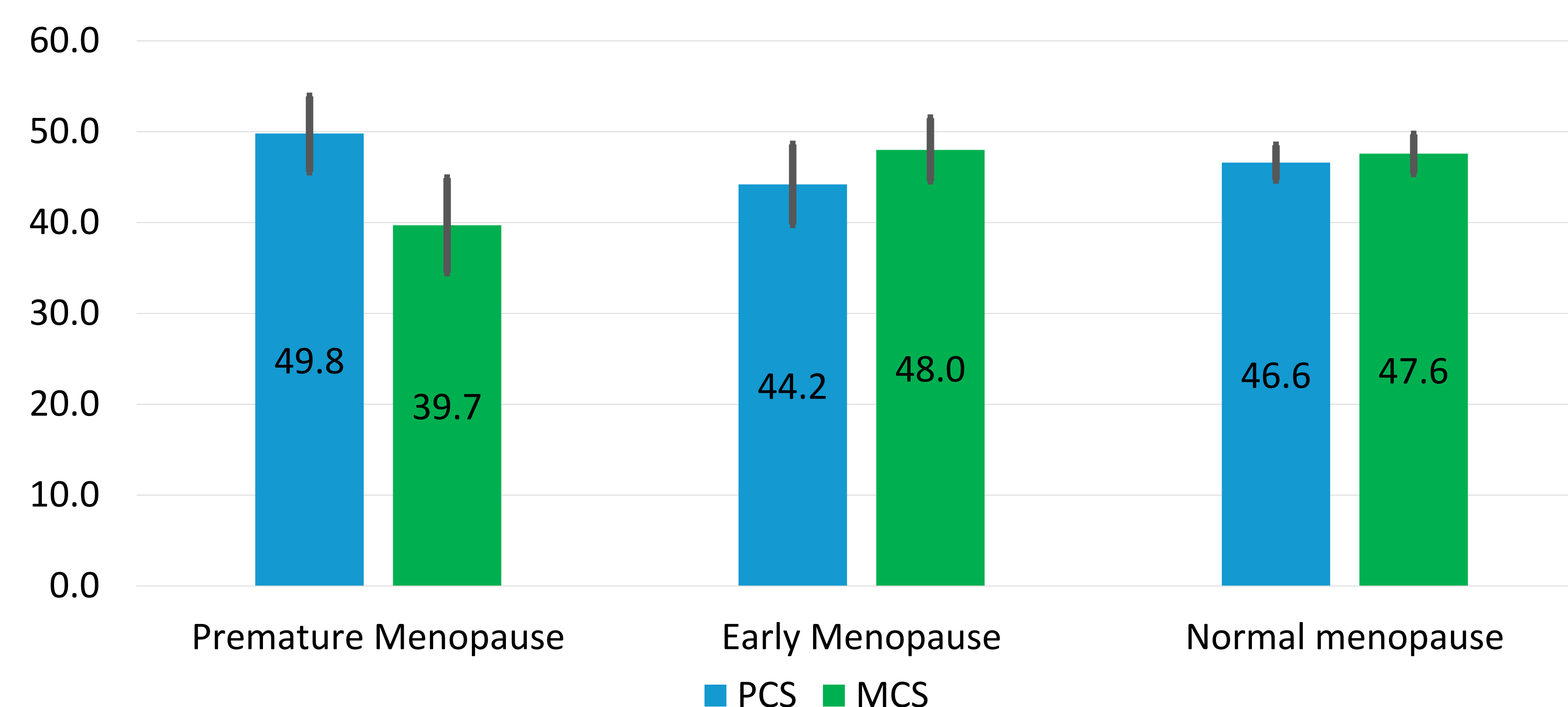
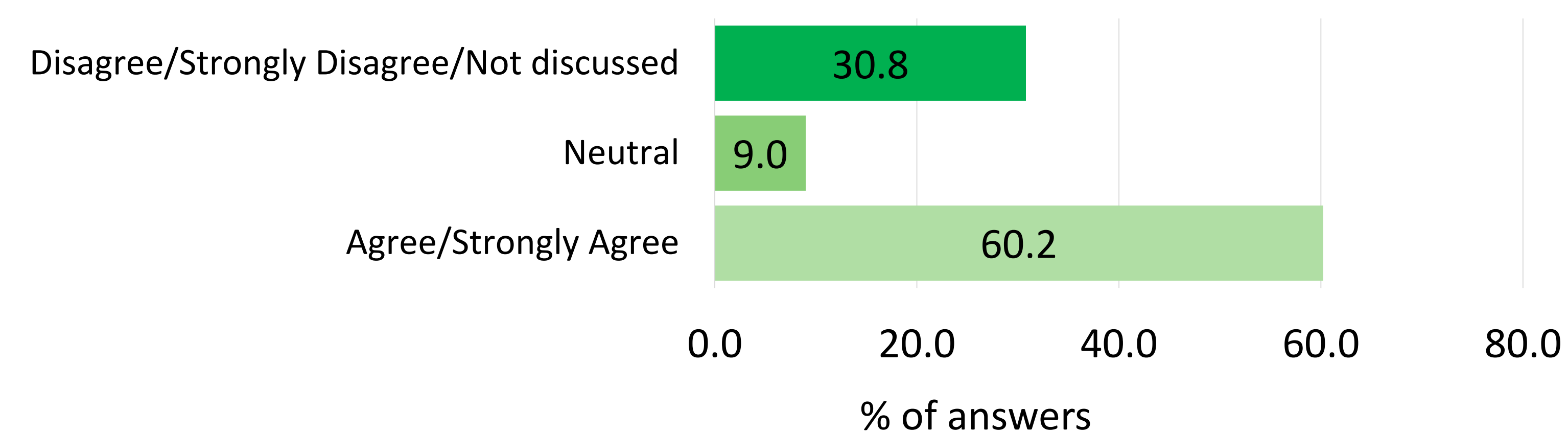


Figure 2: Menopausal women answers to (%) : I feel that my menopause needs and concerns are being addressed by my health care provider



## Discussion

- Early menopause may have downstream health impacts on women.
- There is no knowledge of what causes earlier menopause in HIV+ women.
- Women living with HIV need better menopause care.

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