

Menopausal Experiences of Chinese Immigrant Women in their hosted Countries: A Literature Review



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Introduction

- The number of ethnic Chinese people living outside of China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau has reached almost 50 million¹
- Menopause, in general, is a complicated time in a woman's life, and sees the coming together of factors such as culture, gender, biology, and social identity²
- Not only do Chinese immigrant midlife women experience the universal challenges associated with menopause, but they also face unique obstacles such as moving to a new country and other changes in their social, familial, and work life²
- Despite the fact that Chinese immigrants are among some of the fastest evolving groups in many Western countries, there is a considerable lack of research studying their unique menopause experiences^{3,4}

Methods

- This literature review included two different kinds of studies: (1) focusing on Chinese group; (2) considering Chinese group as a part of sampling
- This review excluded studies that were literature reviews or commentaries, did not have a full text available, were not immigrant studies, had unrelated content, and were focused on Asian immigrants but unclear if Chinese participants were included
- Eighteen studies were included in this systematic review

Results

- The physical signs and symptoms examined in this review were: (1) age at menopause; (2) vasomotor; (3) musculoskeletal; (4) urogenital; and (5) other physical symptoms
- The psycho-behavioural changes studied were: (1) emotional changes; (2) depression; (3) memory; and (4) sexual dysfunction
- The societal and cultural perspectives researched were: (1) menopause as a natural aging process; (2) menopause as a new opportunity in life; (3) silence and stoicism; and (4) migration and acculturation
- The management strategies explored were: (1) resistance to Western medicine; (2) traditional medicine; (3) psycho-cognitive strategies; and (4) community participatory strategies

Discussion

- Chinese immigrant women experienced a wide range of physical symptoms, including muscle and joint pain, urogenital symptoms, vasomotor symptoms, weight gain, decreased physical strength, vision changes, and skin changes
- Chinese immigrant women also experienced psycho-behavioural symptoms including emotional changes, depression, memory loss, and sexual dysfunction
- Participants were most concerned about the impacts of mood changes on their social and familial life, rather than symptoms such as sexual dysfunction and decreased libido
- In this group, menopause was interpreted as a natural aging process and a new opportunity in life
- Cultural expectations of "stoicism" and "silence" may cause immigrant women to be less vocal about their menopause experiences and lead to feelings of repression and loneliness

Conclusion

- Chinese immigrant women were resistant to Western Medicine management such as hormone replacement therapy but were willing to incorporate traditional medicine into their health care
- Chinese immigrant women believed that a healthy mentality is important and used various psycho-cognitive strategies, such as health information seeking, resting and relaxing, and positive self-talk, to reach a good quality of life during midlife
- Some studies initiated the discussion of appropriate community participatory interventions to support menopausal transition

References

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