

# Immigrant Women's Menopausal Transition: A Narrative Review Utilizing Ecosocial Theory

Ping Zou, PhD, RN

School of Nursing, Nipissing University

## INTRODUCTION

- The menopausal transition is characterized by the presence of menopause-related symptoms and there are often limited options for managing these symptoms<sup>1</sup>
- Most current research focuses on the biological aspect of menopause but not the cultural and social transition of immigrant women<sup>2,3</sup>
- Therefore, there exists a gap in research regarding the link between the menopausal transition and the immigrant transition

## OBJECTIVES

To identify the factors that influence the menopausal transition for immigrant women based on Ecosocial theory.

## METHODS

A scoping review was conducted based on the PRISMA guidelines.

Inclusion criteria:

- Discussed middle-aged immigrant women (45–65 years) who were in a natural menopausal transition
- Identified a specific barrier or facilitator to immigrant menopausal health at the individual, familial, or community/societal level
- Written in English.

The databases searched included medical, health-related, social, psychological, educational, and social science databases.

Data analysis guided by Ecosocial theory:

- Independent thematic analysis by 2 reviewers
- Data was broadly categorized at the individual, familial and community/social levels

## RESULTS

Figure 1. Searching and study selection process

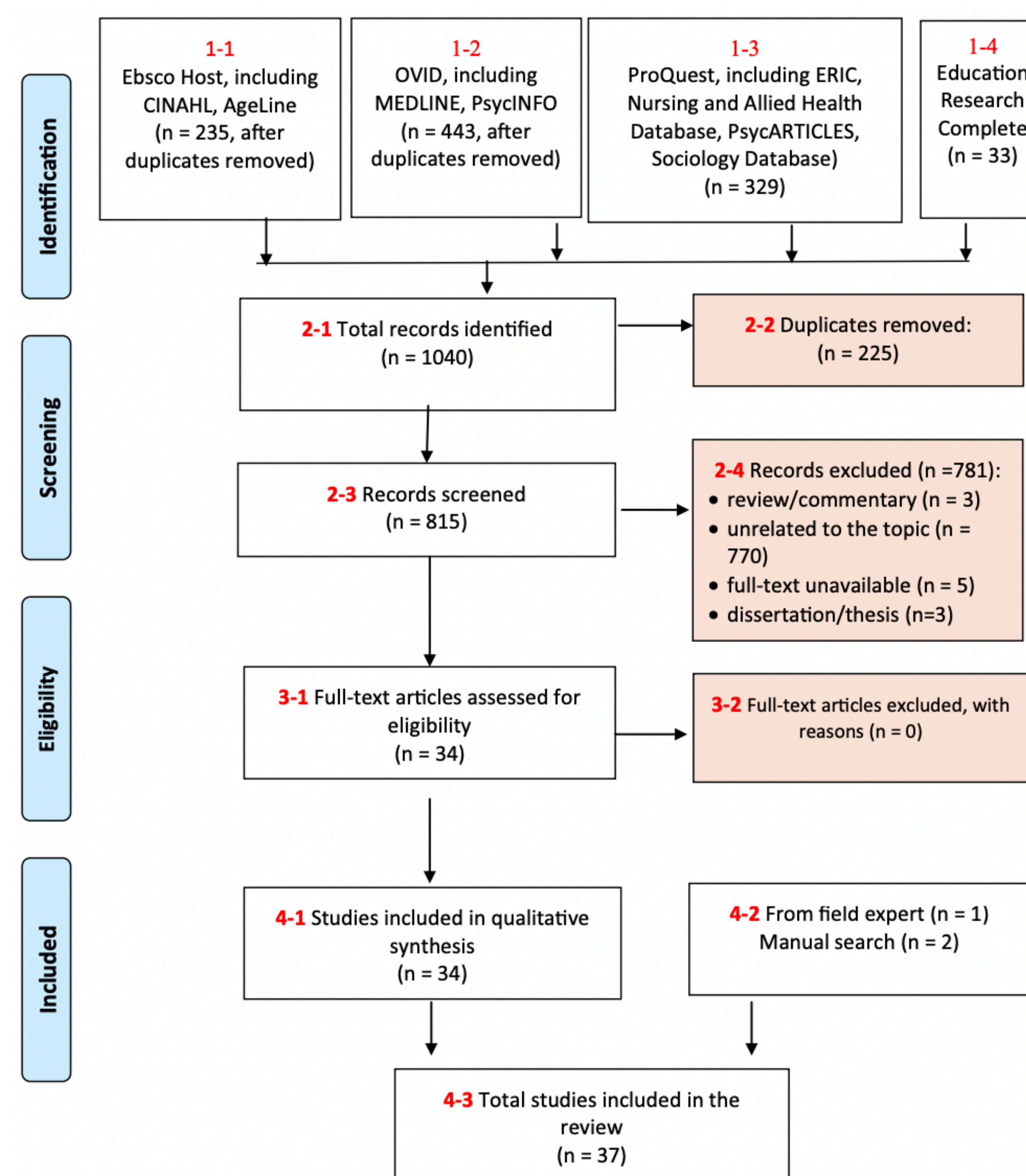


Table 1. Characteristics of Included Studies

Classification	Number (n)	%
Research design		
Qualitative	11	30% (11/37)
Quantitative	19	51% (19/37)
Mixed-design	7	19% (7/37)
Research methodology		
First hand studies	31	84% (31/37)
Secondary analysis of national survey	6	16% (6/37)
Location		
Asia	5	14% (5/37)
Australia	4	11% (4/37)
Europe	5	14% (5/37)
North America & Asia	1	3% (1/37)
North America	22	58% (22/37)
Research setting		
Medical centre	2	5% (2/37)
Community setting	35	95% (35/37)

### Influencing Factors Affecting Menopausal Transition

#### Individual Factors

- Socioeconomic status, income, and employment
  - Physical and psychological health
  - Perception of menopause
- Acculturation and learning new skills

## RESULTS

### Familial Factors

- Relationship with husband/partner
- Relationship with children
- Competing personal needs and family responsibilities

### Community and Social Influencing Factors

- Social network and support
  - Religious services
  - Healthcare services
- Traditional cultural expectations
- Discrimination in host countries

## DISCUSSION

The Ecosocial theory explores how social factors shape disease patterns, advocating for critical thinking in developing social interventions for health and wellness.

Key Findings:

- Macro factors (i.e., sexism) may impact micro factors (i.e., thoughts and perceptions) for menopausal immigrant women
- Acculturation and learning new skills are an integral part of the menopausal transition for immigrant women
- We identified key relationships and services that aid immigrant women

Limitations include:

- Studies included in this review only included immigrant women in Western and developed countries

## NEXT STEPS

Interventions should consider individual, familial, community, and societal factors, as well as actively work to address systemic barriers

Future research is needed to further explore the menopausal transition of immigrant women, especially in non-Western countries

## REFERENCES

- Stanzel KA, Hammarberg K, Fisher J. Experiences of menopause, selfmanagement strategies for menopausal symptoms and perceptions of health care among immigrant women: a systematic review. *Climacteric J Int Menopause Soc.* 2018;21(2):101–10.
- Im E-O, Upton JG. Menopausal transition of Korean immigrant women: a literature review. *Health Care Women Int.* 1997;18(6):507–20
- Hall L, et al. Meanings of menopause: cultural influences on perception and management of menopause. *J Holistic Nurs.* 2007;25(2):106–18.