



Physical and Psychosocial Changes during the Menopause Transition among Latinas: A Narrative Review

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INTRODUCTION

- Menopause is a normal physiologic event, defined as the final menstrual period, which represents the permanent cessation of menses resulting from loss of ovarian follicular function.
- In the United States (U.S), approximately 6,000 women reach menopause daily; 12% of women age 45-54 years are Latinas .
- Latinas are disproportionately affected by many conditions, including cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, depression, and sleep disturbance; all of which increase during the menopause transition.
- Latinas remain largely underrepresented in studies of the epidemiology of menopause.
- There are limited epidemiologic studies across the globe with data on midlife Latinas and menopause.

PURPOSE

- The purpose of this narrative review is to summarize the evidence on menopause-related physiological and psychosocial changes among Latinas.

METHODS

- A thorough search of PubMed was performed using keywords: "Hispanic OR Latinas", "Menopause", "Postmenopause."
- Inclusion:** Peer-reviewed papers in English or Spanish; included data on midlife Latinas (age 40-60 years); women were perimenopause or early postmenopausal; reported on hormonal changes, vasomotor symptoms, sexual health, sleep, mental health, cognition, or cardiovascular health.
- Exclusion:** Interventions or clinical trials; literature reviews; articles that focus on cancer, bone, or genetics.
- Evidence from forty-one studies were summarized.

RESULTS

Our review showed that Latinas experience higher rates of the following physiological and psychosocial changes than non-Hispanic White women during the menopause transition:

- Social function problems, sleep disturbances (38.0%).
- Higher prevalence of metabolic syndrome (21.0%).
- A shorter duration of vasomotor symptoms.
- Greater social support during this period.

Figure 1. Overview of study sites.



Table 1. Summary of sample study objectives and key findings.

# of Studies	# of Latinas (range)	Age (range)	Outcomes	Key Findings for Latinas
Sex Hormones, Menstrual Cycle Patterns				
4	248-275	42-55	Estradiol (E2), testosterone (T)	↑ E2 and ↓ T
Vasomotor symptoms (VMS – hot flash and night sweats) and Sexual Health				
17	27-1829	40-60	VMS, libido, genitourinary symptoms	↑ VMS, ↓ libido, ↑ genitourinary symptoms
Sleep				
5	228-1859	35-74	Sleep quality	Likely to report poor sleep
Mental Health and Cognition				
6	63-1403	40-60	Depressive symptoms, cognitive function	↑ risk for depressive symptoms
Cardiometaabolic Health				
9	46-286	40-60	CVD risk factors	Adverse CVD risk factors, particularly lipids

CONCLUSIONS

- The menopause transition is a complex life stage that includes physiological and psychosocial changes.
- Greater prevalence of menopausal symptoms among Latinas may be attributable to lower income, higher stress, level of acculturation.
- Among Latinas, health outcomes during the menopause transition differ by national origin, cultural contexts, and level of acculturation.
- Mood changes during the menopause transition may be associated with changes in sex hormones, social roles, vasomotor symptoms, and sleep disruption.
- Latinas routinely demonstrate adverse cardiometabolic disturbances that can lead to chronic irregularities and subsequent disease.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

- Further studies with larger samples of midlife Latinas are necessary to examine the health of Latinas during the menopause transition.
- In addition, because Latinas are a heterogeneous group from different cultures and social contexts, researchers and clinicians should examine the role of sociocultural factors during the menopause transition.
- Understanding how the menopause transition affects the health of midlife Latinas may improve the health care of aging Latinas.

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