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

Valentina Marginean, BA; Yamnia I. Cortés, PhD, MPH, FNP-BC
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Nursing

INTRODUCTION

- Menopause is a normal physiologic event, defined as the final menstrual period, which represents the permanent cessation of menstrual cycles 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.

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.

REFERENCES


Additional details can be found in the referenced articles.