Información es Poder (Information is Power):

Menopause Knowledge, Attitudes, and Experiences in Midlife Latinas

Yamnia I. Cortés, ¹ Andrea Cazales, ² Mayra Duran, ³ Lorena Trocel ²

¹College of Nursing, University of Iowa; ²School of Nursing, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill;

³Department of Family Medicine, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

don't ask questions, only if they tell you."

NURSING

Introduction

- Latinas constitute nearly 20% of midlife women in the United States (U.S.) but are underrepresented in menopause research.
- Latinas experience more vasomotor symptoms, depressive symptoms, sleep disturbances, and have a more adverse cardiometabolic risk profile during the menopause transition (MT).^{1,2}
- Studies suggest Latinas have more positive attitudes towards menopause,3 but increased anxiety and lack of knowledge related to the MT.4
- Lack of culturally-relevant education on menopause in Spanish, the second most common language spoken by U.S residents.
- To provide Latinas with culturally-relevant menopause education and clinical care, it is necessary to have deeper insight into their knowledge and experience of menopause.
- Objective: To understand knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of the MT among midlife Latinas.

Methods

- Design: Qualitative descriptive study to explore how participants perceive MT.
- Participants: 29 Spanish-speaking Latinas aged 40-60 years.
- Surveys: Demographics, menopause symptoms, attitudes toward menopause and hormone therapy collected over the phone.
- Focus Groups: Five groups lasting 90 minutes via Zoom conducted in Spanish.
 - Semi-structured interview guide.
 - Bilingual research assistant, community health worker, and notetaker.
 - Transcribed and analyzed in Spanish.
 - Emergent content analysis by 4 bilingual coders.

Results **Participant Characteristics Top 5 Bothersome Symptoms** in Past Two Weeks Mean age 50.3 ± 6.3 years 62% identified as Mexican Menopausal stage 14% premenopausal 41% perimenopausal 45% postmenopausal 79% viewed menopause positively 59% viewed hormone therapy negatively 55% reported having "little knowledge" about Weight Vasomotor gain/ menopause disturbance symptoms bloated **Emergent Themes and Descriptive Quotes** Una etapa de vida (menopause as a stage of life) "I took it as a normal process and never consulted [a doctor]" Treatment & self-management Todo cuerpo es diferente "if there are natural hormones (every body is different) that don't have any side effects, "there are people who have obviously, I'm totally open to that, symptoms of headaches, migraines, but anything that's natural...I'm but every body is different." not pro-synthetic hormones." Impact on family Información es poder (information is power) "My husband is younger than me, and it's something that worries me, "as long as you have information, as far as sex is concerned. you have power [to know] what's going to happen to you..and know "My children already know ...it is where to go or what to take" not because I want to explode out of nowhere...it is part of this biochemical and hormonal process. Sub-themes: Sources of information: What I wish my provider told me No preguntes (don't ask – we don't talk about that) **Negative self-perception of aging** "Maybe because we come to this "That can't happen to me because I country and in one's own country people have to stay young and beautiful, slim, are more quiet, more reserved, they active and wonderful."

Conclusions

- Need for comprehensive menopause education among Latinas.
- Confusion surrounding definition, symptoms, and treatment options.
- Though Latinas viewed menopause as a normal process that differs from person to person, they are confused about what is considered "normal."
- Latinas prefer to receive anticipatory guidance from health providers as soon as possible.
- The importance of involving family members in menopause education efforts was also revealed.

Limitations & Next Steps

- Study limited by single geographic location.
- Conduct and compare focus groups in different locations with multiple Latino subgroups.
- best menopause messaging strategies and educational formats for midlife Latinas.
 - Brochures, group sessions, coaching?
 - In-person or virtual platform?
 - Ideal length and duration

Acknowledgements

This study was funded by the UNC-Chapel Hill's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

References

1. Im, E.O., et al., Menopausal symptom experience of Hispanic midlife women in the United States. Health Care Women Int, 2009; 30(10): 919-34.

2. Green, R., et al., The relationship between psychosocial status, acculturation and country of origin in mid-life Hispanic women: SWAN. Climacteric, 2010; 13(6): 534-43.

3. Villarruel AM, Harlow SD, Lopez M, Sowers M. El cambio de vida: Conceptualizations of menopause and midlife among urban Latina women. Research and Theory for Nursing Practice 2002;16(2):91–102.

4. Reame NK, Altemus M, Cortés Y, Jaime-Lara R. Perimenopause joint pain in urban Hispanic women: A qualitative study. Nursing Research 2013;62(2):E1-E118.



