

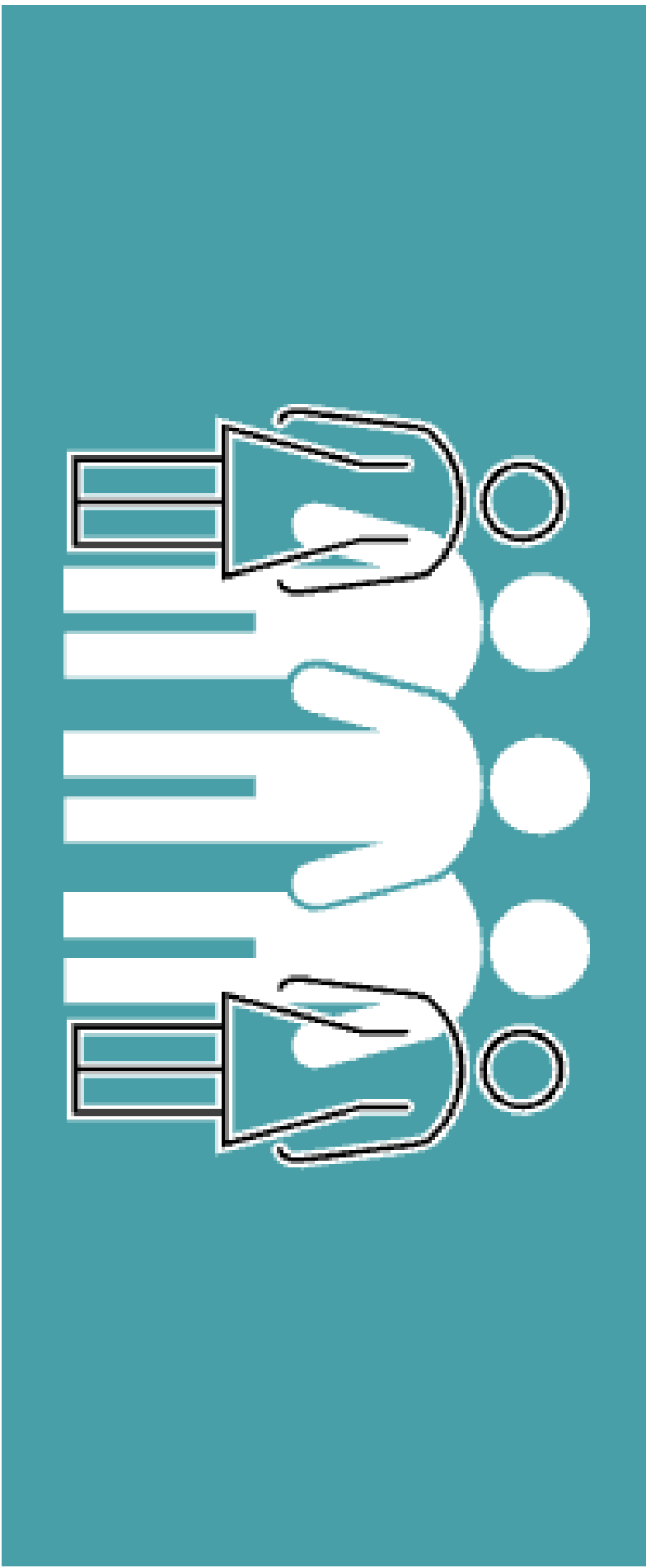


Centering Women's Experience in Menopause: A Qualitative Study

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INTRODUCTION



- Women have been historically under-represented in health literature^{1,2,3}
- Menopause is a unique period where physical and cognitive symptoms occur^{4,5}
- How do women support their health and cognition during menopause?

METHODS

- We recruited 14 healthy women between the ages of 55-65 from Canada
- Participants participated in a 2-hour focus group and spoke about their experiences in menopause and sources of support
- Participant demographics are below

N=14	Mean(SD), Range
Age	60.86(2.85); 56-65
Education	16.14(1.46);12-18
Annual Income	116,786(78,803.73);30-350K

CONCLUSION

- Our results show that women's symptoms are multifaceted
- Women are seeking help actively and from multiple areas
- Our sample was primarily affluent, white, Canadian women
- Future studies would benefit from a more diverse sample

Menopausal Changes Include Emotional Well-Being and Cognitive Performance

- Physical and cognitive changes are the most prominent, but also mental health, emotional variability, social relationships, and attitudes

"That is probably the biggest difficulty that I have is trying to stay focused, which I didn't have that problem before."

"The brain fog is just immense, to the point where I thought I had early Alzheimer's"



Primary Care Physicians are Less Supportive Than Naturopathic Doctors

- Women described being ignored and misdiagnosed by their doctors, leaving them looking for alternative models of care

"I was either blamed or belittled or dismissed."

"I've seen many medical doctors, and one thing that I found was going to a naturopath really helped."

Women are Taking Control to Support Menopausal Changes

- Women tried to advocate, adapt, and actively seek out solutions to the problems they were experiencing



"I just decided to really take control of my life,"

"Every morning, I log on and I'm doing all the Wordle, Quartile, Octoortal, whatever I can, and online puzzles."

Support and Care can be Found in Social Networks of Women

- Both receiving support and "paying it forward" by actively talking to other women

"I try and transfer that knowledge onto any young person, younger person coming up through this stage in their life."

"I think just getting the word out there, talking about it, joining groups... It's going to be very supportive."

HRT can be a game changer

- Most women found hormone therapy to be a huge benefit to their care

"I'm feeling the best that I've every felt in my whole life, but I think that's because of HRT."

"Now, like I said, HRT [is] life-changing."

"HRT is the only thing that's really helping with the symptoms."



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