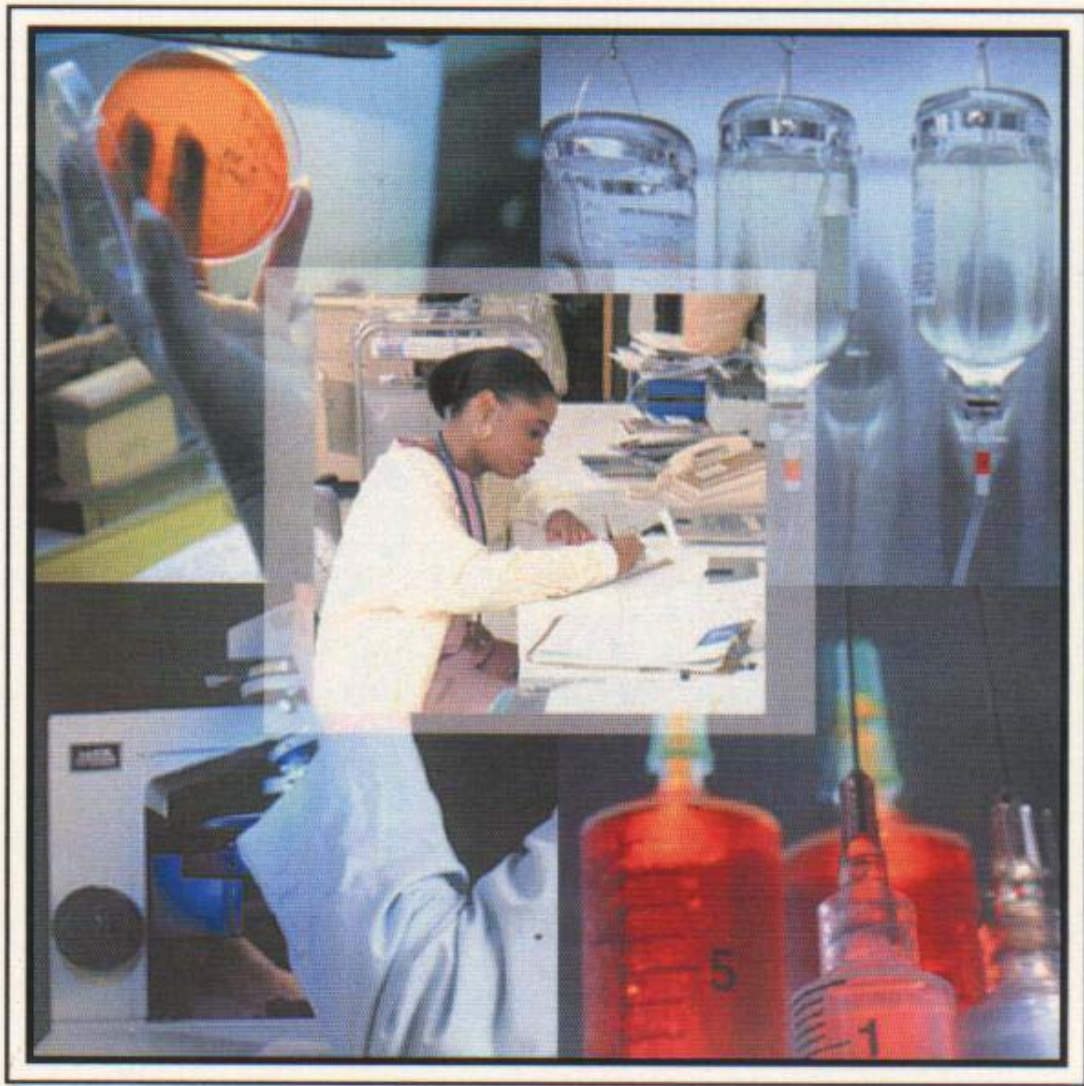


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Elisabeth Simantov, PhD

This study compares rates of health counseling for women in the United States and Israel and identifies factors affecting counseling rates, based on a weighted sample of 2,257 US and 848 Israeli women. In both countries, fewer than half of the women reported speaking with a physician about any of a set of preventive counseling topics (e.g., smoking, diet, exercise) during the year preceding the survey. However, US women reported significantly higher rates of health counseling than did Israeli women, even among specific risk groups (e.g., smokers). Multivariate analysis revealed that "country" had an independent effect after controlling for demographic factors. This paper highlights structural and functional barriers to counseling that persist in the Israeli system in the absence of financial barriers and discusses ways to overcome them.

KEYWORDS. Women's health, preventive care, primary care physicians, barriers

- Factors Associated with Use of Hormone Therapy
Among Women with Mobility Impairments 19
Kyeongra Yang, PhD, MPH, RN
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The purpose of the study was to examine the factors associated with hormone therapy (HT) use among women with mobility impairments. A non-probability sample

of 188 menopausal women (average age = 53 years) from 38 states was recruited in 2004 for the study. Twenty-two percent of participants were currently taking HT; 33% were past users. Using multinomial logistic regression, this study found that those most likely to be taking HT now or in the past were older women, knowledgeable about HT, had had a hysterectomy, had bone loss, and had their provider's encouragement. Implications for health care providers are discussed.

KEYWORDS. Hormone therapy, mobility impairment, women's health

HRT and Everyday Memory at Menopause: A Comparison of Two Samples of Mid-Aged Women

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Christine Stephens, PhD

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Research on the effect of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) on memory in mid-aged women is equivocal although findings indicate that oestrogen may enhance verbal memory. Mood may mediate the relationship between HRT and memory. This study examined the effect of HRT on mood and everyday memory in two samples of women between ages 40 and 60 years. In the cross-sectional comparison (N = 124), HRT users performed significantly better on tests of everyday and verbal memory. A within-woman comparison of 17 women showed that everyday memory, working memory, and delayed verbal memory improved after 3 months of HRT use. The improvement in memory was not mediated by mood. These results suggest that any effect of HRT on mood may be short-term but that some aspects of everyday memory are enhanced, particularly verbal memory. The development of the everyday memory construct and future investigation are discussed.

KEYWORDS. Menopause, HRT, everyday memory, verbal memory

Gender and Social Support in the Context of Cardiovascular Disease

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Beatriz Rueda, PhD

Ana M. Pérez-García, PhD

Objective: Gender and social support (SS) can affect the level of adjustment to cardiovascular disease (CVD). In this study we attempted to determine the effects of both factors on negative mood state, quality of life (QOL) and perceived health control (PHC) in patients at high CVD risk or with CVD. We also tested for an interactive effect of gender and SS.

Method: One hundred and fifty-three chronic outpatients (89 females and 60 males; 4 provided no information on gender) were assessed. Levels of social support were measured. Other psychosocial variables included were negative mood state, domains of QOL (satisfaction and free time) and PHC.

Results: The results, as expected, indicated main effects of gender and social support. Females experienced higher negative mood state and lower PHC in comparison with males. Patients with low SS reported less satisfaction, free time and PHC and had more negative mood state. No interaction of gender by social support was found.

Conclusions: *Levels of social support and gender are important aspects that influence emotional and psychological functioning in patients with CVD. Specific interventions designed for females and individuals with poor emotional and instrumental support may contribute to positive changes in their adjustment.*

KEYWORDS. Gender, cardiovascular disease, social support, perceived control, quality of life

Barriers to Moderate Physical Activity in Adult Lesbians

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Tara Baillargeon, MLIS

Mary McElroy, PhD

Deborah J. Aaron, PhD

Nancy C. Gyurcsik, PhD

Adult lesbians are not sufficiently physically active to achieve physical and psychological health benefits. Lesbians are one of the least understood minority groups. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to use an ecological framework to identify factors internal to individuals and present in their social environments that may impede participation in regular physical activity. Twenty-one self-identified lesbians aged 22 to 61 years participated in one of four focus groups. The lesbian participants reported many general barriers (i.e., obstacles to participation regardless of sexual orientation) similar to previous research with other populations of women, not stratified by sexual orientation, such as being too tired and the lack of a physical activity partner. A number of lesbian-specific barriers (i.e., obstacles unique to being a lesbian) were also identified, such as the lack of lesbian-focused physical activity groups and the lack of same-sex family memberships to fitness facilities. In conclusion, for many of the general barriers, some of the proven and effective traditional intervention strategies are likely to be effective in increasing physical activity participation rates in the lesbian population. However, barriers related to sexual orientation are likely deeply entrenched in the socio-cultural system of American society and require a societal rethinking of attitudes towards lesbians, a cultural change that is not as easily amenable to traditional health promotion interventions.

KEYWORDS. Physical activity, lesbians, barriers, sexual orientation, public health

How Can Socio-Economic Differences in Physical Activity Among Women Be Explained? A Qualitative Study

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Kylie Ball, PhD

Jo Salmon, PhD

Billie Giles-Corti, PhD

David Crawford, PhD

This qualitative study investigated why women of low socio-economic status (SES) are less physically active than women of higher-SES. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 high-, 19 mid- and 18 low-SES women. A social-ecological framework, taking into account intrapersonal, social and environmental level influences, was adopted to guide the development of interview questions and interpreta-

tion of data. Thematic analysis identified a number of key influences on physical activity that varied by SES. These included negative early life/family physical activity experiences (a consistent theme among those of low-/mid-SES); participation in a wider range of physical activities in leisure time (high-SES); greater priority given to television viewing (low-SES); lack of time due to work commitments (low-SES); lack of time due to family commitments (high-SES); and neighbourhood-level barriers (low-SES). Financial costs were not perceived as a key barrier by women in any SES group. Public health strategies aimed at reducing SES inequalities in physical activity might focus on overcoming negative early experiences/attitudes to physical activity, reducing television viewing and promoting a wider variety of different types of physical activity, and addressing neighbourhood safety and other barriers to physically active lifestyles in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.

KEYWORDS. Physical activity, socio-economic status, qualitative research, women

Beliefs of Low-Income and Rural Older Women Regarding Physical Activity: You Have to Want to Make Your Life Better

Cheryl J. Dye, PhD, CHES
Sara Wilcox, PhD

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This study elicited perceptions about physical activity in 28 older rural and low-income women (27 were Caucasian) in four focus groups to identify factors that affected their physical activity levels. This population is greatly understudied and underserved. Overall, themes that surfaced across the groups were consistent with social cognitive theory. Prominent themes included outcome expectations about both physical and mental benefits; beliefs about the sources of motivation to be physically active, including both internal sources and external sources; barriers to being active; and the types of social environments important for physical activity. These findings provide useful information regarding the types of physical activity programs preferred by rural, low-income older women and ways to build self-efficacy and social support among members of this population group with regard to increasing physical activity.

KEYWORDS. Aging, women, low-income, rural, physical activity, exercise