



Menopause: Mental Health, Health Issues, and Coping Strategies. A Qualitative Study

Mamnua^{1,4}, Wawan Febri Ramdani^{1,4}✉, Farida Kartini^{2,4}, Dhesi Ari Astuti^{2,4}, Dian Retnaningsiah^{3,4}, Wantonoro^{1,4}

¹Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Science Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta

²Department of Midwifery, Faculty of Health Science, Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta

³Department of Management, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universitas Aisyiyah, Yogyakarta

⁴Center for Woman, Family, and Disaster Studies, Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Article Info

Article History:

Submitted September 2024

Accepted July 2025

Published July 2025

Keywords:

Menopause,
Coping Strategies;
Social Support; Sexuality

DOI

<https://doi.org/10.15294/kemas.v21i1.13733>

Abstract

Menopause marked a transformative phase in many women's lives, often accompanied by complex physical, emotional, and social challenges. This study aimed to explore how women in Yogyakarta experienced and managed menopause, shedding light on their unique coping strategies and support systems. A qualitative design employed purposive sampling to recruit women aged 45 to 55, ensuring diverse and relevant experiences. In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted and analyzed thematically to uncover underlying patterns and meanings. Four major themes emerged: physical and emotional changes, adaptation strategies, social support dynamics, and shifts in sexuality. Women reported symptoms such as sleep disruption, fatigue, and mood instability, and adapted by seeking information and modifying their lifestyles, although resources were often insufficient. Family and community support provided essential emotional relief, while changes in intimacy required communication and adjustment. These findings highlighted the need for holistic menopause management that integrates physical, emotional, and relational support.

Introduction

Menopause is not merely a biological milestone but a main life transition that affects millions of women worldwide (Meeta *et al.*, 2021). It represents a natural phase in aging, yet it often carries profound implications for women's physical, emotional, and social well-being. Typically occurring between the ages of 45 and 55, menopause is marked by the cessation of menstruation due to hormonal changes. These changes often lead to symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, sleep disturbances, mood swings, and decreased libido (Gur *et al.*, 2004). The severity and interpretation of these symptoms, however, can vary significantly. While some women manage menopause with

minimal disruption, others experience distress that interferes with daily life (Prajapati, 2020). This variation is shaped by personal, cultural, and environmental factors that influence how menopause is perceived and managed (Prajapati, 2020).

In many societies, menopause is still surrounded by stigma, silence, or misinformation. Such cultural taboos can prevent open conversations about symptoms and support, both at the community level and within healthcare systems. As a result, many women navigate this transition without adequate information or guidance (Achmad & Agustina, 2025). To cope with menopause, women often adopt diverse strategies. These

✉ Correspondence Address:

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Science, Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta
Email: wawanramdani@unisayogya.ac.id

range from hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to natural remedies, such as diet modifications, exercise, and mindfulness practices (Prajapati, 2020). Emotional support from family members, especially spouses, as well as peer or community groups, plays a crucial role in enhancing resilience (Prajapati, 2020). However, much of the existing research continues to focus on biomedical or symptom-based approaches, neglecting the lived experiences of women (Cronin *et al.*, 2025; Wood *et al.*, 2025). These subjective, day-to-day experiences are essential to understanding how menopause is actually navigated in real life, especially in many cultural contexts. A study in Central Java, Indonesia, found that physical symptoms during premenopause and menopause significantly affect women's quality of life, highlighting the importance of addressing these domains in Indonesian settings (Marni & Husna, 2023).

In Indonesia, and particularly in Yogyakarta, such qualitative perspectives remain underexplored. Factors such as social expectations, local beliefs, and healthcare access can significantly influence how women perceive menopause and decide whether to seek help. Understanding these influences is crucial to creating effective and culturally appropriate support systems. This study aims to address that gap by exploring the lived experiences of menopausal women in Yogyakarta. Through a qualitative lens, it seeks to understand how women interpret their symptoms, what coping strategies they find efficacious, and what forms of support they consider meaningful, ultimately contributing to more responsive and empathetic health interventions.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of women's menopause experiences. This approach aims to capture participants' subjective perspectives, allowing researchers to understand the experiences, coping strategies, and social support deemed most effective by women experiencing menopause. This study employs a qualitative approach along with a case study method, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the menopause phenomenon through

detailed interviews with several participants. The population for this study consisted of menopausal women aged 45 to 55 residing in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, covering four administrative regencies. This region was selected due to its cultural and social diversity, which can shape the menopausal experience, and its inclusion of both urban and rural communities to apprehend a wide range of perspectives. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify individuals with direct and relevant experience related to the study topic. This method was chosen to ensure that the participants could provide rich, reflective, and meaningful accounts of their menopausal experiences, coping mechanisms, and sources of social support.

The study aimed to recruit approximately four participants. While this may seem small, the intention was to conduct an in-depth exploration using a case study design. In qualitative research, the focus is on depth rather than breadth, and smaller sample sizes are acceptable when they allow for detailed, contextually grounded analysis. This approach enables researchers to closely examine the unique narratives of each individual. Furthermore, in many qualitative studies, a small sample size is considered sufficient when data saturation is reached, that is, when no new significant insights emerge from additional participants. This study has received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of Aisyiyah University Yogyakarta with number 2853/KEP-UNISA/V/2023. All participants will be given clear information about the research's objectives, the process involved, and the potential risks and benefits. Participation consent will be documented through signed consent forms. Participants' confidentiality and anonymity are strictly maintained, and the data collected will be used solely for the purposes of this study.

The analysis in this study is conducted using a thematic approach, where the data obtained from in-depth interviews will be identified and categorized into main themes that reflect the experiences, coping strategies, and social support relevant to menopause. This

analysis process involves several stages. Starting with the verbatim transcription of the interviews, followed by repeated readings to recognize the overall content. Subsequently, the data will be analyzed to identify significant patterns, themes, and subthemes. The researchers will use qualitative data analysis software to help organize and categorize the data, allowing for a deeper and more meaningful understanding of women's menopause experiences. The findings from this analysis will be compared with existing literature to identify similarities or differences with previous research.

Results and Discussion

This study identified four themes, as illustrated in Figure 1.

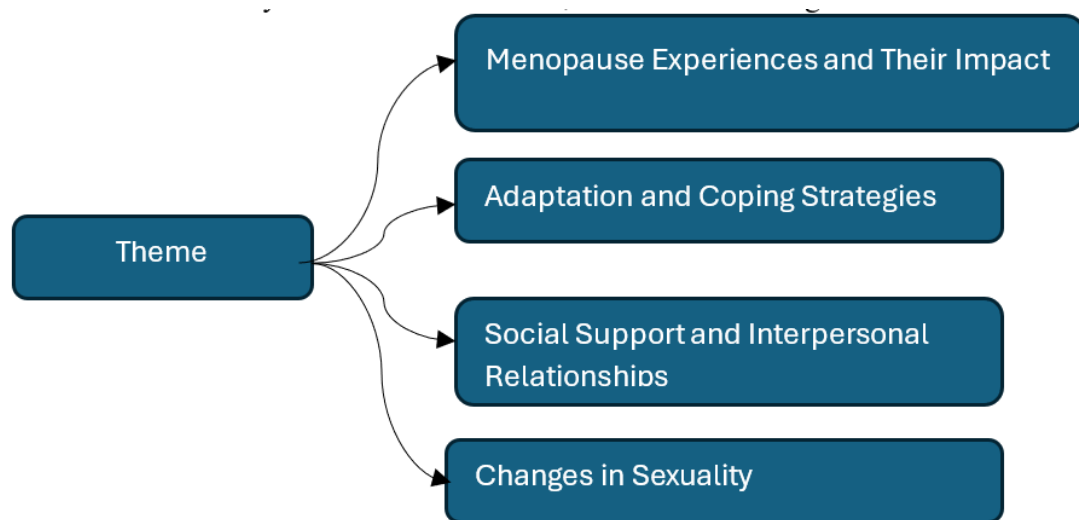
Menopause experiences often involve significant physical and emotional challenges. Participants described various physical and emotional aspects they encountered during this transition period.

Physical: One of the most apparent signs of menopause is the cessation of the menstrual cycle, as one participant noted, "It's been about three years since my last period (P. 1)." Sleep disturbances were also a common complaint,

with another participant stating, "It's hard to sleep (P. 2)." Fatigue was another frequently mentioned symptom, "I get tired easily. Even lifting something simple feels too much (P. 3)," highlighting how menopause can affect daily energy levels.

Emotional: Emotional sensitivity increases during menopause, with participants saying, "I feel more sensitive (P. 4)." This heightened sensitivity often leads to irritability, "I get angry quickly (P. 4)." Concerns about personal and social changes were also prominent, as expressed in the quote, "I'm worried that those who know me will notice these changes (P. 5)."

Menopause is a natural phase in a woman's life but is often accompanied by challenges that can significantly impact daily life (Cowell *et al.*, 2024). Participants in this study reported various physical symptoms such as sleep disturbances and fatigue, which reflect studies showing that hormonal changes during menopause can cause significant sleep disruptions and overall energy decline (Anurogo, 2023; Hestiantoro *et al.*, 2019; Zhang & Cheng, 2024). Emotionally, women often experience increased sensitivity and mood (Barko *et al.*, 2019; Gordon *et al.*,



Theme 1. Menopause Experiences and Their Impact

2021; Schweizer-Schubert *et al.*, 2021). These emotions can contribute to interpersonal challenges and feelings of isolation. Studies indicate that these mood changes are related to hormonal fluctuations that also affect neurotransmitters in the brain associated with mood regulation (Hestiantoro *et al.*, 2019; Zhang & Cheng, 2024). Further research to identify and address the psychosocial impacts of menopause is crucial, especially in enhancing effective coping strategies and support systems for women going through this phase. Better education and resources can help women navigate the complexities of menopause more effectively (Munn *et al.*, 2022; Warke, 2021).

Theme 2: Adaptation and Coping Strategies

To cope with the changes during menopause, participants developed various coping strategies.

Coping: Information was a primary need, with participants seeking knowledge from online sources, “I sometimes browse on Google (P. 6).” However, the information found was often inadequate, highlighting the need for more reliable and in-depth sources.

Lifestyle Adjustments: Changes in diet and exercise were necessary to manage symptoms. “I eat more vegetables. At night, I only consume fruits (P. 7).” The use of supplements was also frequent as part of their adjustment strategy, “I take some kind of vitamin, but I can’t remember the name (P. 8).”

Coping strategies used by women during menopause vary widely. From seeking information online to lifestyle changes like diet and exercise (Alazawa *et al.*, 2023). Research indicates that women who proactively seek information and implement lifestyle changes tend to experience better symptom relief (Annisa *et al.*, 2022). However, challenges remain, particularly regarding the quality and accuracy of available information. Women often feel frustrated with inadequate resources or misleading information. Studies suggest that more effective health education and access to valid information are needed to help women manage menopause symptoms more effectively (Backonja *et al.*, 2021; Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, integrating professional support, such as counseling or therapy, can be a valuable

addition to existing coping strategies. This multidisciplinary approach can provide further support for women to manage menopause in a healthy and effective manner (Li *et al.*, 2023).

Theme 3: Social Support and Interpersonal Relationships

Support from family, friends, and the community helped participants manage the menopause transition.

Social: Communication with spouses was crucial, with one participant noting, “It’s fine with my husband. No problem (P. 1).” However, participation in community activities was sometimes limited. “For the PKK, I participate as a cadre, particularly in health activities in the village (P. 2).”

Social support plays a crucial role in helping women manage the menopause transition. Positive social interactions with family and friends can provide significant emotional benefits and help reduce feelings of isolation during menopause (Cowell *et al.*, 2024; Patel *et al.*, 2023). It aligns with studies in Indonesia demonstrating that social support can reduce depression levels among the elderly (Kamila *et al.*, 2024). The role of husbands or partners is also crucial, where open communication about needs and changes during menopause can strengthen relationships and ensure women feel supported by their closest ones. Studies have shown that emotional support from partners has a significantly positive impact on how women experience menopause (Edwards *et al.*, 2021; Khalesi *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, family support has been shown to reduce stress levels in women during critical reproductive periods. Increasing access to support groups and communities that understand menopause can also provide additional channels for support and experience exchange, helping women find collective solutions to challenges faced during menopause (Edwards *et al.*, 2021; Khalesi *et al.*, 2020).

Theme 4: Changes in Sexuality

Menopause also affects sexuality, including libido, satisfaction, and intimate relationships.

Sexuality: A decrease in libido was

acknowledged by participants, “I feel lazy or have no desire.... (P. 3),” and sexual satisfaction often diminished, “I feel less satisfied, and I feel it’s not enough (P. 4).” Intimate relationships underwent significant changes, “But because of my husband’s demands, I still comply (P. 5),” indicating adaptations in relationship dynamics.

Menopause often brings significant changes in sexuality, including decreased libido and changes in sexual satisfaction (Cagnacci *et al.*, 2020). It is a vital aspect of the menopause experience that affects both the physical and psychological aspects of women’s intimate lives. Research indicates that hormonal changes during menopause can directly affect sexual arousal and physical response, leading to decreased satisfaction in sexual activity (Mernone *et al.*, 2019). Participants in this study also indicated the need for adaptation in intimate relationships to accommodate these changes. Couples who can communicate openly about needs and changes during menopause tend to have more satisfying sexual

experiences despite the challenges. It highlights the importance of sexual education and couples therapy in addressing sexual issues that arise during menopause (Meeta *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, studies suggest that a holistic approach to managing sexual changes during menopause should include medical aspects, such as consulting with healthcare professionals about hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to help reduce some physical symptoms affecting sexual life (Cameron *et al.*, 2023). This approach should also involve emotional and psychological support to help women and their partners understand and navigate these changes (Garg & Robinson, 2021). To provide a comprehensive understanding of the study findings, a schematic overview was developed to illustrate the interconnectedness of the themes identified in this research. The diagram summarizes how physical and emotional experiences during menopause lead to the adoption of various coping strategies, influenced by the availability of social support, and how these processes collectively impact

Table 1. Schematic Overview of Study Findings on Menopause Experiences Among Women in Yogyakarta

Main Themes	Categories	Sub-Categories	R e l a t i o n a l Explanations
1. Menopause Experiences and Impact	Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cessation of Menstruation• Sleep Disturbances	Triggers the need for adaptation and social support
	Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heightened Sensitivity• General Worries	Affects interpersonal relationships and coping strategies
2. Adaptation and Coping Strategies	Information Seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Browsing Online• Independent Reading	Helps understanding, but information often insufficient
	Lifestyle Adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diet and Exercise• Supplement Use	Efforts to reduce physical and emotional symptoms
3. Social Support and Relationships	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication with Husband• Community Activities	Provides emotional support and reduces isolation
4. Changes in Sexuality	Libido	Decreased Libido	Affects intimate relationships with partner
	Satisfaction	Reduced Sexual Satisfaction	Requires communication and partner adaptation
	Intimacy	Adjustments in Intimate Relations	Impacts couple’s quality of relationship during menopause

changes in sexuality. This schematic underlines the progression from menopause experiences to adaptation and the critical role of community and family support in shaping women's well-being during this transition. It serves as a visual guide to better comprehend the multifaceted nature of menopause as experienced by women in Yogyakarta, reinforcing the need for holistic, culturally sensitive approaches in supporting women through menopause.

Conclusion

This study reveals that menopause is a multifaceted experience involving significant physical, emotional, and social challenges. Women face symptoms such as cessation of menstruation, sleep disturbances, fatigue, heightened emotional sensitivity, mood swings, and changes in libido. Coping strategies range from seeking information online to making lifestyle adjustments, but the need for reliable resources is evident. Social support from family, friends, and the community plays a crucial role in alleviating isolation and providing emotional relief. Addressing changes in sexuality through open communication and professional guidance is also vital. A holistic approach to menopause management, incorporating comprehensive physical, emotional, and social support, is essential for enhancing women's quality of life during this transition. This study recommends improving menopause education and support by providing accurate information and fostering community-based networks, including support groups and digital platforms, to help women access guidance and share experiences, enhancing their quality of life during menopause.

References

- Achmad, L.H., & Agustina, S., 2025. Health Belief Model in The Prevention of Type-2 Diabetes Mellitus in Fertile Age Couple. *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat*, 20(3), pp.408–417.
- Alazawa, Z.F.R., Barrouq, D.M.S., Irshaidat, T., & Ayassrah, N.E.S., 2023. A Cross-Sectional Study for Assessment of Menopausal Symptoms and Coping Strategies Among Jordanian Women of 40-60 Years Age Group. *International Journal of Reproduction, Contraception, Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 13(1), pp.6–13.
- Annisa, S., Lestari, P., Indah, W.S., & Djuari, L., 2022. the Correlation Between Lifestyle and Menopausal Symptoms Among Women in Three Big Cities of Indonesia. *International Journal of Research Publications*, 116(1), pp.177–184.
- Anurogo, D., 2023. The Art of Psychoneuroimmunology in Menopause Management. *Journal of Biomedical Research & Environmental Sciences*, 4(6), pp.972–992.
- Backonja, U., Taylor-Swanson, L., Miller, A.D., Jung, S.-H., Haldar, S., & Woods, N.F., 2021. There's a Problem, Now What's The Solution?: Suggestions for Technologies to Support the Menopausal Transition from Individuals Experiencing Menopause and Healthcare Practitioners. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, 28(2), pp.209–221.
- Barko, K., Paden, W., Cahill, K.M., Seney, M.L., & Logan, R.W., 2019. Sex-Specific Effects of Stress on Mood-Related Gene Expression. *Complex Psychiatry*, 5(3), pp.162–176.
- Bauld, R., & Brown, R.F., 2009. Stress, Psychological Distress, Psychosocial Factors, Menopause Symptoms and Physical Health in Women. *Maturitas*, 62(2), pp.160–165.
- Cagnacci, A., Venier, M., Xholli, A., Paglietti, C., & Caruso, S., 2020. Female Sexuality and Vaginal Health Across The Menopausal Age. *Menopause (New York, N.Y.)*, 27(1), pp.14–19.
- Cameron, C.R., Cohen, S., Sewell, K., & Lee, M., 2023. The Art of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) in Menopause Management. *Journal of Pharmacy Practice*, 37(3), pp.736–740.
- Cowell, A.C., Gilmour, A., & Atkinson, D., 2024. Support Mechanisms for Women during Menopause: Perspectives from Social and Professional Structures. *Women*, 4(1), pp.53–72.
- Cronin, C., Donevant, S., Hughes, K.-A., Kaunonen, M., Marcussen, J., & Wilson, R., 2025. Amplifying Women's Voices in Menopause Research: The Importance of Inclusive Perspectives. *Health Expectations: An International Journal of Public Participation in Health Care and Health Policy*, 28(1), pp.e70163.
- Edwards, A.L., Shaw, P.A., Halton, C.C., Bailey, S.C., Wolf, M.S., Andrews, E.N., & Cartwright, T., 2021. It Just Makes Me Feel A Little Less Alone: A Qualitative Exploration of The Podcast Menopause: Unmuted on Women's Perceptions of Menopause.

- Menopause*, 28(12).
- Garg, A., & Robinson, L., 2021. Surgical Menopause: A Toolkit For Healthcare Professionals. *Post Reproductive Health*, 27(4), pp.222–225.
- Gordon, J.L., Sander, B., Eisenlohr-Moul, T.A., & Sykes, T.L., 2021. Mood Sensitivity to Estradiol Predicts Depressive Symptoms in the Menopause Transition. *Psychological Medicine*, 51(10), pp.1733–1741.
- Gur, A., Sarac, A.J., Nas, K., & Cevik, R., 2004. The Relationship between Educational Level and Bone Mineral Density in Postmenopausal Women. *BMC Family Practice*, 5(1), pp.18.
- Hestiantoro, A., Jasirwan, S.O., Wiwie, M., Shadrina, A., Ibrahim, N., & Astuti, B.P.K., 2019. Low Estradiol Levels Escalate Menopausal Symptoms Leading to Mild Cognitive Impairment in Postmenopausal Women. *Medical Journal of Indonesia*, 28(1), pp.40–46.
- Kamila, N., Dara, M., Handayani, N., Turana, Y., Hardi, N., & Info, A., 2024. *Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat Elderly in Indonesia*. 20(2), pp.58–64.
- Khalesi, Z.B., Jafarzadeh-Kenarsari, F., Mobarrez, Y.D., & Abedinzade, M., 2020. The Impact of Menopause on Sexual Function in Women and Their Spouses. *African Health Sciences*, 20(4), pp.1979–1984.
- Li, Y., He, H., Wang, J., Chen, Y., Wang, C., Li, X., Dai, A., Liu, Y., Xi, X., Huang, J., Zou, M., Fan, Y., Zhou, M., Yi, P., Yu, L., & Lei, X., 2023. Effect of Multidisciplinary Health Education Based on Lifestyle Medicine on Menopausal Syndrome and Lifestyle Behaviors of Menopausal Women: A Clinical Controlled Study. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11.
- Marni, & Husna, P.H., 2023. Physical Domain of Quality of Life in Premenopause and Post Menopause Women in Central of Java. *Kemas*, 19(2), pp.319–332.
- Meeta, M., Majumdar, S., Tanvir, T., Sharma, S., Shah, J., Aggarwal, N., Olayi, R., Ahuja, M., & Joshi, S.A., 2021. Effects of Menopause on Sexual Function in Indian Women: A McCoy's Questionnaire-Based Assessment. *Journal of Mid-Life Health*, 12(2).
- Mernone, L., Fiacco, S., & Ehlert, U., 2019. Psychobiological Factors of Sexual Functioning in Aging Women - Findings From the Women 40+ Healthy Aging Study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, pp.546.
- Moses C.O., Jude N.E., Galina C.E., Chinyere R.O., & M, C.E., 2017. Assessment of the Knowledge And Awareness of Menopausal Coping Strategies Among Women In Umuowa Community, Orlu Local Government Area, Imo State Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences*, 16(6), pp.113–117.
- Munn, C., Vaughan, L., Talaulikar, V., Davies, M.C., & Harper, J.C., 2022. Menopause Knowledge and Education in Women Under 40: Results from an Online Survey. *Women's Health*, 18, pp.86–96.
- Nguyen, T.M., Do, T.T.T., Tran, T.N., & Kim, J.H., 2020. Exercise and Quality of Life in Women with Menopausal Symptoms: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(19).
- Patel, V., Ross, S., & Sydora, B.C., 2023. Assessing Young Adults' Menopause Knowledge to Increase Understanding of Symptoms and Help Improve Quality of Life for Women Going Through Menopause; A Student Survey. *BMC Women's Health*, 23(1), pp.493.
- Prajapati, M.M., 2020. Awareness Regarding Menopausal Symptoms and Effect on Daily Life of Postmenopausal Women. *Journal of Patan Academy of Health Sciences*, 7(1), pp.130–136.
- Sapre, S., & Thakur, R., 2014. Lifestyle and Dietary Factors Determine Age at Natural Menopause. *Journal of Mid-Life Health*, 5(1).
- Schweizer-Schubert, S., Gordon, J.L., Eisenlohr-Moul, T.A., Meltzer-Brody, S., Schmalenberger, K.M., Slopian, R., Zietlow, A.L., Ehlert, U., & Ditzen, B., 2021. Steroid Hormone Sensitivity in Reproductive Mood Disorders: On the Role of the GABAA Receptor Complex and Stress During Hormonal Transitions. *Frontiers in Medicine*, 7(January).
- Warke, B., 2021. Designing Interactive Technological Interventions for Menopausal Women: Designing and Developing Interactive Technology Tools to Help Aging Women Navigate Information About Stages of Menopause to Increase Self-Awareness of Biopsychosocial Changes and Mana. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on Tangible, Embedded, and Embodied Interaction*.
- Wood, K., McCarthy, S., Pitt, H., Randle, M., & Thomas, S.L., 2025. Women's Experiences and Expectations During the Menopause Transition: A Systematic Qualitative

Narrative Review. *Health Promotion International*, 40(1).

Zhang, F., & Cheng, L., 2024. Association Between Sleep Duration and Depression in Menopausal Women: A Population-Based Study. *Frontiers in Endocrinology*, 15(February), pp.1–9.