Women's decision making about the use of hormonal and nonprescription remedies for the menopausal transition

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**Method: Integrative Review**
- **Literature search**
- **Databases:** Cinahl, Psych Info, 1982-2001
- **Keywords:** decision making for HT, attitudes to HT, herbal remedies, qualitative research
- **Findings compared within and across studies**
- **Categories developed and merged**

**Practice Issues:**
- Women who have initiated HT will be revisiting their initial decision
- Women evaluated the information given to them about menopause as lacking in quality
- Counseling Services provided to menopausal women in managed care are being evaluated for quality, breadth, and individualization

**Healthcare Services for menopausal women need improvement**

**Findings**

**Decision making is a non-linear process with stages (Woods et al., 1997)**
- Precontemplation
- Contemplation
- Commitment
- Critical Evaluation
- Continuance

**Women cycled through the stages and revisited prior stages.** The process was the same regardless of their decision (HT, nonprescription remedy, lifestyle change)

**Women's Experiences During Decision making**
- Ambivalent
- Confused
- Frustrated
- Unsure
- Conflicting and incomplete information on HT

**Women's Experiences with Health Care**
- Lack of information available
- Poor communication with physicians
- Lack of time at visits to discuss concerns
- Concerns not taken seriously
- Experiences with NPs not described

**Findings (cont)**

**Influences on the Process**

**Internal:**
- Needs, benefits and risks
- Attitudes and beliefs
- Values
- Context

**External:**
- Interactions With
  - Family, friends, co-workers
  - Cultural group
  - Health care providers
- Media and information sources

**Desired Role in the Decision Process:**
- Relied on provider to decide
- Decided together with provider
- Relied on self to make decision

**Desired Health Care Experience:**
- Communication and open dialog with sharing of information
- Assistance with weighing of benefits and risks

**Conclusions**

**Implications for Research**
- Since the release of the WHI, the context of the decision making has changed. Further studies are needed
- Interventions to enhance women's decision making need to be designed and tested

**Implications for Practice**
- Nurses can meet women's needs for information by designing accessible and unbiased information about menopause management
- During counseling clarify the role women want to take in the decision process, and determine their stage in the decision process
- Explore women's perception about their needs and goals, values and beliefs, and knowledge about menopause

Seven investigators found that during the decision making process, women weighed the benefits and risks, the advantages and disadvantages, the potential gains against possible harms, or the pros and cons. One usually outweighed the other.