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The attitudes and beliefs of midlife women towards physical activity: a meta-ethnography.

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Background

Physical activity (PA) offers numerous physical and mental health benefits. However, midlife women face unique challenges that may influence their attitudes and beliefs towards engaging in regular PA. This paper provides interim findings of a meta-ethnography of existing qualitative primary research to provide a comprehensive understanding of these attitudes and beliefs.

Method

Meta-ethnography was devised by Noblit and Hare (1988). It is a seven-phase interpretive methodology (Toye *et al.*, 2021) which is both theory-based and potentially theory-generating.

Results

Phase 1 and 2 of meta-ethnography: getting started and deciding what is relevant

A systematic literature search was conducted across electronic databases for relevant studies published between 2000 and 2022 and a PRISMA flow diagram completed using the eligibility criteria. Initially, 460 records were identified, and 43 studies were included, with a total of 1071 participants. Studies were based in 15 different countries, the predominant being USA (n=20) and UK (n=4). A table of study characteristics was developed to document demographic data and methodological and quality assessments of the included studies conducted (Campbell *et al.*, 2011).

Phase 3 and 4 of meta-ethnography: reading the studies and determining how the studies are related

Two reviewers read and extracted data. The findings (second order interpretations) of the qualitative studies were transferred into a Word® document. Broad concepts using participant quotes (first-order constructs) were identified and viewed through a socioecological lens (Figure 1).

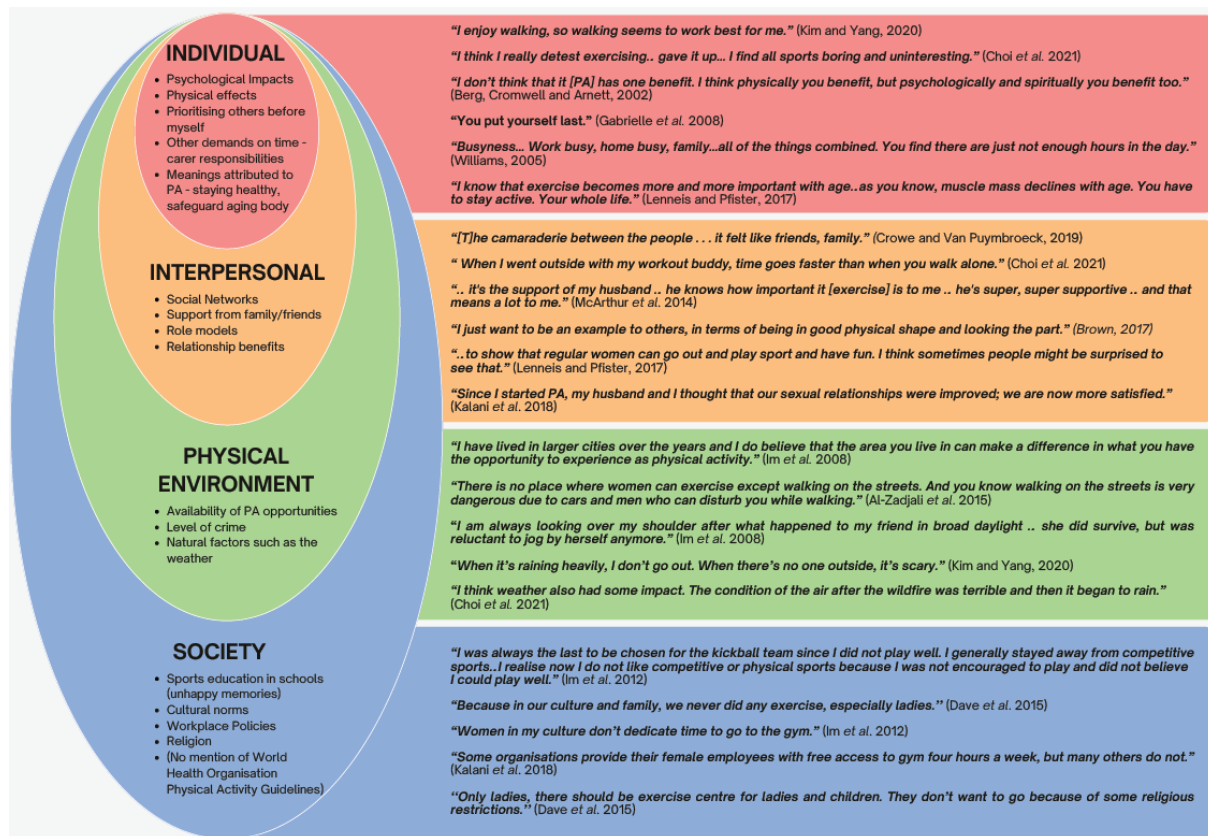


Figure 1: Participant quotes (first order constructs) viewed through a socioecological lens.

Phase 5 of meta-ethnography: translating the studies into one another

Analysis of the second-order constructs (researcher interpretations) is ongoing and NVivo 20® software for qualitative analysis is used to monitor analytical decisions. Analysis involves abstracting ideas through careful reading, continuous comparison, and collaborative efforts.

Phase 6 and 7 of meta-ethnography: synthesising the translations and expressing the synthesis

Synthesising and expressing the second-order constructs into a conceptual model is progressing. We will adhere to the eMERGe guidelines (France et al., 2019) and the GRADE CERQual (Lewin et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Individually, the included qualitative studies focus on culture as a main driver of midlife women's attitudes and beliefs towards PA. However, socioeconomic factors seem a

predominant influence when reanalysed through meta-ethnography. Understanding these complexities is crucial for developing effective strategies to promote PA in midlife women.

By addressing the identified themes targeted interventions can be developed that encourage and support midlife women to lead active and healthy lifestyles. Promoting PA can lead to improved overall well-being and better future health outcomes in this vital population.

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