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Overcoming the barrier and seeking treatment for Urinary Incontinence: A qualitative study

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Background: Urinary incontinence is a worldwide chronic condition with high prevalence in postmenopausal women. More often sufferers do not seek treatment and it has great impact in their quality of life.

Objective: The aim of this study was to explore how do postmenopausal women living with Urinary incontinence experience seeking treatment.

Method: This qualitative study used a hermeneutic phenomenology approach and was conducted by the semi-structured interview in two sessions with three or five weeks interval. Five postmenopausal women with greater than 10 year's duration of Urinary incontinence were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling.

Each interview audio taped lasted 40-60 minutes at private place. Van-Mannan hermeneutic phenomenological method was used for data analysis. Member checking, auditing peer group, and audit trail were used for reliability and validity. The Research Ethics Committee in Universiti Putra Malaysia granted approval for the study and all participants interviewed completed the consent form.

Results: The theme 'Overcoming the barrier' emerged from stories and shared experiences of postmenopausal women. This means that they overcame the barrier to prevent seeking treatment by getting: support from family, information from friends, family, and media, and insurance coverage or financial support.

Conclusion: Results indicated that the women need the support from husbands and children which is effective in deciding to seek treatment and more information about Urinary Incontinence and available treatment by health care providers, published materials, and media. Also, financial support and the possibility of enjoying medical insurance facilitate in their decision to seek treatment.

Key words: urinary incontinence, postmenopausal women, seeking treatment