

IN PERIMENOPAUSAL WOMEN DOES BLACK COHOSH PROVIDE EFFECTIVE RELIEF OF MENOPAUSAL SYMPTOMS

Black Cohosh is a member of the dandelion family, and is native to North America. The plant root and leaf is used in health supplements.

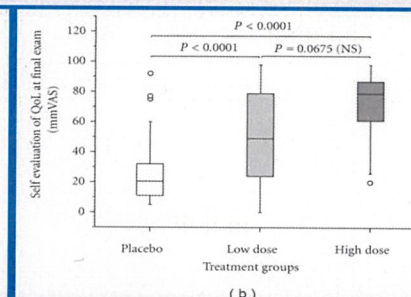
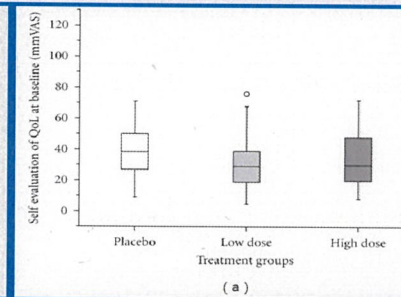


Objective There are a variety of treatment options available for women to consider. As a health professional, understanding available therapies and any associated risks and benefits will enable the nurse to educate women and assist them in making an informed decision about menopausal treatment options with the aim to maintaining their quality of life.

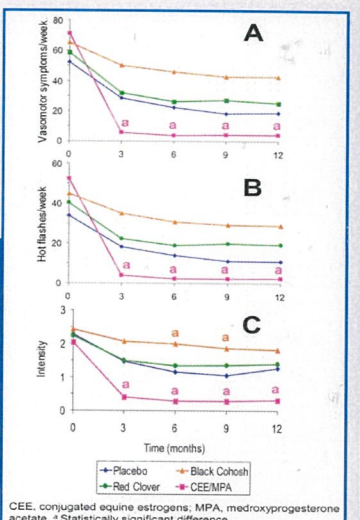
Method A review of three randomised, double-blind, placebo controlled trials was undertaken to assess the effect and the safety of black cohosh on the relief of menopausal symptoms on a range of women over a period of 3 to 12 months. Measurement of treatment effect was dependent on the severity of baseline symptoms.

Results Research shows that black cohosh provides relief for some symptoms, mainly hot flushes and night sweats. Further studies are being undertaken to determine the most effective dose rate for symptom relief, and any adverse effects of high dose, long term intake of black cohosh.

QoL (Quality of Life) assessment (a) at baseline and (b) after 12 weeks of treatment with PLA, LD, and HD. Circles denote outliers. Black cohosh was superior to placebo in reducing the total KMI score in a dose-dependent manner. Regarding KMI sub-items, a significant reduction in each item was seen only with the HD group. The clinical relevance was the strongest for vasomotor sub-items (e.g., hot flushes, sweating), less for psychological/vegetative sub-items (e.g., insomnia, nervousness/irritability, and depressive events/melancholy) and the smallest for somatic symptoms (joint pain), although significant (Schellenberg, et al., 2012).

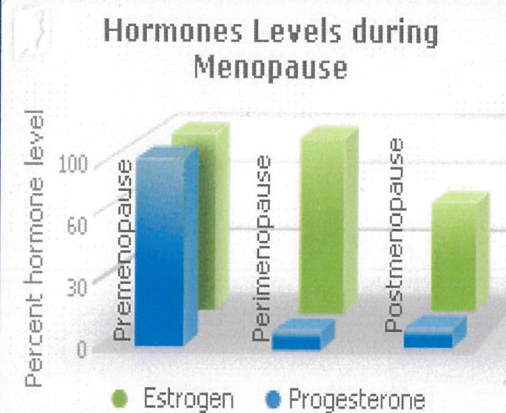


Change in vasomotor symptoms, by study group: A) average number of vasomotor symptoms, hot flushes plus night sweats; B) average number of hot flushes; and C) average intensity of hot flushes (Geller, et al., 2009).



CEE, conjugated equine estrogens; MPA, medroxyprogesterone acetate. * Statistically significant difference

Menopause is a natural phenomenon which occurs for all women when their finite number of ovarian follicles are depleted. As a result, estrogen and progesterone hormone levels fall, and luteinising hormone (LH) and follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) increase in response. Menstruation becomes erratic and eventually stops (Singh, et al., 2007).



Recommendation In New Zealand, black cohosh is marketed as a dietary supplement, therefore does not have pre-marketing safety checks undertaken (Medsafe, 2009). Black cohosh is available in combination with other herbs or as a single preparation. It can be dispensed by herbalists, so caution needs to be taken regarding overdosing (Lawton, 2006). Consideration needs to be taken when making a choice on what treatment option to pursue, and seeking advice is recommended.

References

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The Most Common Menopause Symptoms



Symptoms For some women the consequences of menopause can effect their lives dramatically (Lawton, 2006). Symptoms, both psychological and physical, include hot flushes, night sweats, joint and bone pain, vaginal dryness, incontinence, mood swings, headaches, anxiety, reduced interest in sex, weight loss or gain, loss of confidence, and bouts of depression (Bryant & Knights, 2011).

- Hot Flashes
- Night Sweats
- Irregular Periods
- Loss of Libido
- Vaginal Dryness

Forming my PECOT question

PECOT	Information relating to question	Rationale
Population	Women 45-57 years of age with menopausal symptoms	This is the age range when women are in the natural perimenopausal stage and when symptoms may appear
Exposure/ Intervention	Women with menopausal symptoms who are using black cohosh	I will be examining articles that have used random clinical trials in which black cohosh was compared to a placebo, or no treatment at all
Comparison	Women with menopausal symptoms who do not use black cohosh	I am interested in what happens when black cohosh is used in comparison to no treatment
Outcome	Relief of menopausal symptoms when using black cohosh	Does black cohosh relieve symptoms
Time	Baseline to 12 weeks to show resolution or not of symptoms through the use of black cohosh	Average time frame used in clinical trials to evaluate the efficacy of black cohosh

Using the PECOT method I have formed the following question:

In perimenopausal women does black cohosh provide effective relief of menopausal symptoms?

Reference:

Schneider, Z., & Whitehead, D. (2013). Identifying research ideas, questions, statements and hypotheses. In Z. Schneider, D. Whitehead, G. LoBiondo-Wood, & J. Haber (Eds.), *Nursing and midwifery research methods and appraisal for evidence – based practice* (pp. 63-64). Sydney, NSW, Australia: Mosby.