



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project title: General Practitioner Approach to Women experiencing Menopause Transition

Name of Principal Investigator/Supervisor (PI): Professor Janine Wiles

Name of Co-investigator(s): Dr Kyle Eggleton (Academic staff member and GP)

Name of Student Researcher(s): Dr Bronwen Thomas

Researcher introduction

Tēnā koutou katoa

I am a Master of Public Health student researcher at the School of Population Health, University of Auckland. I am also a vocationally registered general practitioner (GP) currently working in the Lakes region in New Zealand. My primary role during this research study is as an academic researcher. My academic supervisors for this study are Professor Janine Wiles and Dr Kyle Eggleton.

What is this research about and why am I invited?

You are invited to take part in this qualitative study which investigates general practitioners' knowledge and their approaches to women experiencing menopause transition. The rationale for investigating this subject is that menopause transition is frequently managed in general practice, the history of management has been varied and not always positive, and there is sparse information on the knowledge and approach of general practitioners particularly in a New Zealand context. New Zealand general practitioners (GPs) are under resourced and findings from this research could provide recommendations for improved resources for GPs and, consequently, improved outcomes for patients.

This Participant Information Sheet (PIS) explains the details of the study and the requirements for participants. It is 5 pages long. You do not have to immediately decide whether to participate. The consent form is attached. You will be provided with a copy of both the PIS and Consent Form. Contact details for the researcher are provided and you are encouraged to ask any questions that arise or clarify any points raised in the PIS or Consent Form.

The study will recruit existing GP peer groups to form focus groups. Participation is voluntary for each individual GP. If your peer group chooses to participate, you can decline to be involved. Peer groups and individual participants will not be identified in published data. This protects the confidentiality of both participants and non-participants. Your identity will only be known to the researchers.

Existing groups of GP peers are the format for participant involvement as this creates a safe space where GPs usually feel comfortable discussing their practice. The group approach also encourages discussion and information sharing which may benefit some participants. As GPs are busy professionals, the aim is to minimise

inconvenience and impact on time demands. It is important to note that participation will not be the same as involvement in a peer review group as contributions will be recorded, analysed and interpreted by the researchers.

What will participation involve?

As a prospective participant, you need to read this Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form carefully and contact the researcher with any questions or concerns. Each peer group can nominate a co-ordinator, but all participants will need to consent individually.

Participants will be involved in a 90-minute face-to-face focus group discussion in their known peer group at a location convenient to the group. Peer groups can be formal or informal. Focus group sizes will be between 3 and 8 GPs. We are looking to conduct up to 6 focus groups.

1 hour of the focus group time will be allocated to the discussion of the research study topics and the remaining 30 minutes will be used to open and close the session with karakia and to make introductions (whakawhanaungatanga).

The focus group topics will be as follows (all relating to menopause transition):

1. Knowledge of menopause / female midlife
2. The cultural worldviews that are privileged and inform thinking and practice around menopause
3. Views of menopause transition – female empowerment vs oestrogen deficit approach
4. The content of what GPs talk about with patients in consultation
5. The tools, models and resources used in consultation
6. The resources GPs would like to see available and how they should be delivered
7. The GP role in menopause care and how it could be improved

As a participant, your personal data will be collected as follows: your age, gender (identity), ethnicity, nationality, place of medical degree (New Zealand or overseas), years since graduation and qualification as a GP. You can choose not to answer any question, and this will not affect your participation in the study. The questions are for the purpose of analysing the representation of different demographic groups and the types and levels of GP experience within the study. This information will only be published in combined, de-identified data.

Focus group participants will be provided with a written summary from their group session and with a report on completion of the study. Participants will be invited to respond with feedback to the summary and report. Feedback options are via email and/or a scheduled phone call. All feedback will be recorded and analysed for the purposes of the study.

As a focus group participant, you must not discuss the focus group session contents with anyone other than the research team and you must respect the confidentiality of

the other participants. This means you and the other participants must not disclose what is discussed in the focus group, what is provided in the individual focus group summary, and who the other participants in your group are. This applies to participants who complete the study and those who withdraw from the study.

You are **not** obligated to participate in this study if others in your peer group form a focus group for this research. It is entirely your choice whether to participate and you may also withdraw at any time. It should have no impact on your usual work or peer group activities.

Potential risks of the study

There is a potential risk of minor emotional upset during this study as the focus group sessions will involve several participants and the exact conversation is not completely predictable. This risk will be mitigated by the guidance of the researcher in the focus group session. The researcher will set ground rules for the focus group at the beginning of the session and will intervene in the conversation if they are concerned for any member of the group.

You can contact the research team before and after your focus group session if you have any questions or concerns. If participation in this study causes you any distress or upset, please inform the research team. Any communication of this nature will not be published in the study findings.

You may seek support from:

- your own GP
- counselling services e.g. EAP, which is accessible for members of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) through their website or through some employers
- call 1737 at any time for free access to a trained counsellor.

Will I receive any payment or reimbursement?

No reimbursement or compensation will be made for participation but a 'thank you' contribution of kai/food will be provided to the focus group.

Funding for this research is being sought from the University of Auckland.

Data storage/retention/destruction/future use

During this study, the personal information you provide will be kept confidential and will only be known to the researchers.

All research data will be de-identified and stored indefinitely at the University of Auckland. It will be retained beyond the end of the study in case any review of published data is required. Each focus group will be coded alphabetically by the student researcher in the de-identified transcripts and the coding list linking this to the identifiable data will only be accessible to the researchers.

All identifiable data including consent forms, personal information, and coding lists will be stored separately and deleted 6 years after the completion of the study.

The electronic consent forms and personal details forms, audio recordings and transcripts will all be stored electronically with password protection on a University of Auckland research drive only accessible to the research team. Any paper consent or personal detail forms will be scanned and stored electronically, and the paper version will then be immediately destroyed. The research team is comprised of Dr Bronwen Thomas, Professor Janine Wiles, and Dr Kyle Eggleton.

All focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed. During the focus group recording, individual participants do **not** have the right to stop the recording but they are permitted to remain silent or to leave at any time.

Only the researchers and the transcriber will have access to all transcripts. These will not be available to participants due to security and confidentiality considerations as they will contain data relating to multiple participants. Summary documents for each focus group and an overall study report will be provided to participants.

Participation or non-participation in this study will not affect your employment or your relationship with the University of Auckland.

Your Participation and Right to Withdraw

Participation in this study is voluntary. You can decline to participate without giving a reason.

Participants do not have permission to stop the recording during a focus group, but they can choose not to answer (remain silent), or they can leave the room at any time. If you have any concerns regarding contributions to the focus group, please speak to the research team.

Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason. Due to the nature of data collection in a focus group, participants do not have the right to withdraw their data after the focus group is recorded. Withdrawal of a participant's data from focus groups risks compromising the integrity and contextual meaning of the dataset.

Participation in this study has no effect on your employment or usual peer group activities. You should not feel pressured to participate or remain in the study due to peer or employer influences.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Due to the nature of the study, anonymity with respect to the participant's identity is not possible. Only the researchers and other participants in the same focus group will know a participant's identity. Although all participants will have committed to keeping the focus group confidential, we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality.

Confidentiality with respect to the participant's identity cannot be guaranteed to participants in a focus group but all efforts will be made to de-identify participants for published data and reports.

Participants and focus groups will be de-identified for any publication or report. Focus groups will be coded. The researchers will keep a list of the codes and the

linked consent forms and participant information sheets. Names and specific geographical locations will not be published apart from the overall geographical area used for the whole study (Te Manawa Taki / Midlands region of New Zealand).

A third-party professional transcriber will be used but they will sign a confidentiality agreement. As they will be transcribing the recording, they will be aware of names of participants when used and potentially the location of focus groups if mentioned during the recording.

Although all data will be coded and de-identified, there is still a very small possibility that a participant could be identified from published data. Your identifiable data will be kept securely but protection against data breach in the future cannot be 100% guaranteed.

Contact Details

If you would like to participate, or you require further information, please contact:

Student Researcher – Dr Bronwen Thomas, Master of Public Health student, School of Population Health, University of Auckland
Ph: Number: 021 08224949 (designated study phone, checked daily)
Email: btho845@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Supervisors:

Professor Janine Wiles, School of Population Health, University of Auckland
Email: j.wiles@auckland.ac.nz
Dr Kyle Eggleton, School of Population Health, University of Auckland
Email: k.eggleton@auckland.ac.nz

In case of concerns regarding this study or research team

If you have any concerns or complaints that can't be addressed directly with the research team, you may contact:

Professor Judith McCool, Head of School of Population Health, University of Auckland.

Address: M&HS Building 507, 28 Park Avenue, Grafton, Auckland 1023,
Phone: 09 3737599 (Ext. 82372)
Email: j.mccool@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142.
Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ahrec@auckland.ac.nz

*Approved by the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee on **24th February 2026** for three years. Reference Number **AH30143***