

# Exploring Black Women's Experience of Hysterectomy

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## 1 SUMMARY

*The study explores the hysterectomy experience of Black women living in HRM.*

**Seven** Black women who've had hysterectomies for non-life threatening reasons\* were interviewed.

**Eight** major categories emerged from the data; this presentation focusses on support and information in policy and practise

*\*includes fibroids, severe pain & dysfunctional bleeding*

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Rationale: Black women need to understand what it means to have a hysterectomy & its impact on life afterwards.

- Purpose: To explore the experiences of Black women in Halifax Region, NS who have undergone hysterectomies for non-life threatening conditions.
- Research question: What are the hysterectomy experiences of Black women living in Halifax, NS?



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## **Research objectives**

To understand the hysterectomy experience for Black women living in Halifax, NS, in relation to:

- (1) Meaning of hysterectomy
- (2) Decision-making process
- (3) Expectations about care & treatment
- (4) Expectations about recovery

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## LIT REVIEW- *Hysterectomies in Canada*

- More than 80% of hysterectomies are performed for non-life threatening reasons
- There are wide variations in rates across Canada and within provinces for non-life threatening hysterectomies
- Hysterectomy rates in Atlantic Canada are among the highest in the country

\* *Black women (and all women) need more comprehensive information on this frequent surgery*

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## Literature Review-*Black women's health in NS*

- Black women's health studies show similar systemic barriers to accessing health services
- Studies on menopause and depression have shown similar findings to Black women's experience in the US.
- Similarities include the importance of family, community and spirituality in maintaining good health



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## LIT REVIEW- other jurisdictions

Research documents aspects of the following as associated with the hysterectomy experience:

- 1) decision-making process,
- 2) information needs,
- 3) alternatives to hysterectomy,
- 4) influence of cultural beliefs and perceptions,

*\*These are all areas in which more information may be required*

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## STUDY DESIGN & METHODS

Theoretical perspective: Black feminist

Methodological Approach: Interpretive phenomenology

Data Collection & Analysis



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## *Black Feminist Perspective*

Recognizes that Black women's experiences of oppression - both gender-based and racially-motivated, may result in distinct needs.

These needs are different from those of: (1) non-Black but non-dominant ethnocultural women, (2) Caucasian women and (3) Black men...

(Guy-Sheftall, 1990; Barbee, 1994; Collins, 2000).

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## *Interpretive Phenomenology*

Approach leads to ***understanding*** rather than describing the phenomenon (Mackey, 2005).

The relationship between study participants' life context(s) and their narratives is included in the processes of data collection and analysis (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

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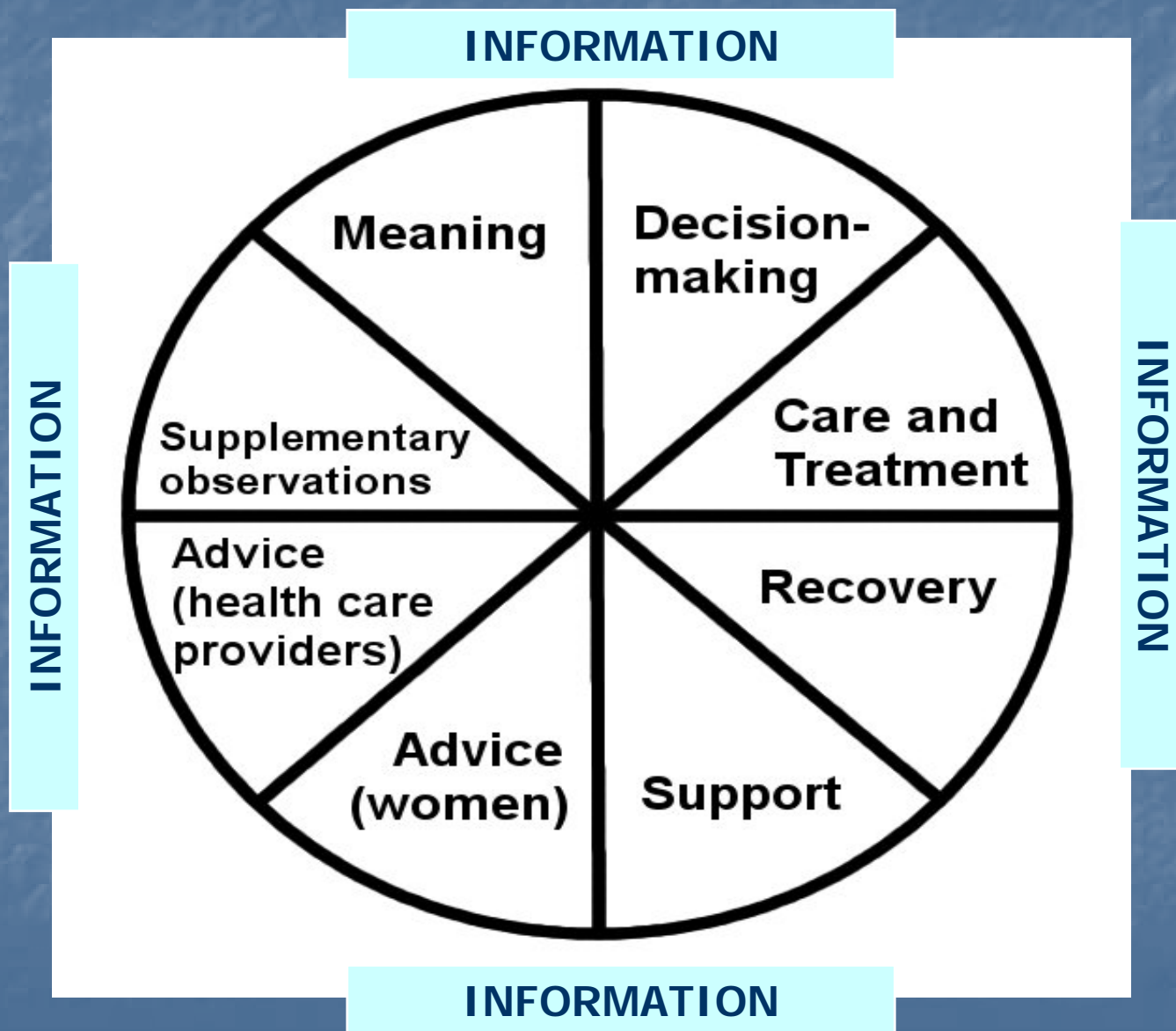
## *Data Collection & Analysis*

- Semi-structured interviews with 7 Black women in HRM who had a hysterectomy for non-life threatening reasons.
- Reflexive note taking (the researcher)
- Thematic analysis to illuminate
  - Unique experiences and similar experiences
  - Support Needs (Information and Other)



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## Key Themes and Findings



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## **Discussion and Implications**

- Provide insights into Black women's experience through their narratives,
- Empower Black women by giving voice to their experiences and perhaps most importantly,
- Address the need to contextualize socio-cultural differences in lived experience among women in health service provision

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## Finding Implications for Health Care Provision

- **Support**

Family, Friends, Health Care Provider, Workmates, Work (Managers), Spiritual

- **Information as Support**

Type, Format and Stages at which it is provided

- **Mental health**

Encourage women to seek support during recovery



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## **Policy and Service Provision Recommendations**

New knowledge from the study will be shared with  
identified target audiences including:

- Health Association of African Canadians
- Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health
- Capital District Health Authority
- IWK Health Centre (*through diversity committee*)

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## **Recommendations for Further Research**

- Research on hysterectomy experiences of Black women of other national origin, and women of other ethnocultural groups
- Research on the longer term outcomes of the hysterectomy experience
- Research on the role of male partners (and perceptions of men in the community) in the decision-making process
- Research on whether or not non-clinical factors influence health professionals' advice to women regarding hysterectomy



# Conclusion

This study sought to explore the hysterectomy experiences of Black women (meaning & expectations about care, treatment and recovery).

The hysterectomy experience is more complex (and long term) than the literature and the clinical model would suggest.

And includes: spirituality, symptom severity, emotional recovery and employment security



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