



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***EXPERIENCES OF POSTMENOPAUSAL IRANIAN WOMEN LIVING WITH
URINARY INCONTINENCE USING HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGY***

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By

MINOO PAKGOHAR

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

January 2013

DEDICATION

This study is heartily dedicated

To the soul of my affectionate mother, hoping to have answered a trace of her kind favors...

To my respectful father, whose wholehearted selflessness paved the way for my success, and achievements...

To my lovely sister Maryam,

To my dear brother, Alireza, the liveliness of my life...

To my dear husband, R. Khani, who accompanied me by all means...

To my dear daughter, the fruit of my life, Yasaman, for whom I hope to be a perpetual company...

To my niece, Negar, who has always planted smiles on my face...

Last but not least,

To all those whom I love, and those who taught me things...

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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January 2013

Chair: Professor Tengku Aizan Bt Tengku Ab Hamid, Ph.D.

Faculty: Gerontology

The aim of this study was to explore experiences of living with urinary incontinence (UI) among postmenopausal Iranian women. Specifically, this research focuses on (1) the meaning of living with UI, (2) experiences of sexuality, and (3) experiences of seeking or not seeking treatment. Hermeneutic phenomenology underpinned the study's interpretive research approach. In-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted in two sessions with 17 postmenopausal women aged between 52 to 68 years old. Interviews were conducted in participant's home and lasted 60-90 minutes per session. Verbatim transcriptions from audio-taped interviews were translated from Persian to English and formatted for data analysis.

Emerging themes identified as the meaning of UI were 'disruption of normal functioning', 'self-imposed restrictions', and 'feelings of despair'. 'Disruption of normal functioning' signifies how UI intruded the women's personal life space; namely, emotional, spiritual, physical, and daily tasks. 'Self-imposed restrictions' means that the women had to suppress their pleasures and needs as well as avoiding social relationship.

'Feelings of despair' symbolizes adverse experiences that women had related to uncertainty about future, dependency, loneliness, hopelessness, and desire for death. Two dominant themes emerged in relations to experiencing sexuality: 'dependent upon husband's reaction to UI' and 'redefining sexuality as intimacy'. These themes indicate that women's experiences of sexuality were dependent upon husbands' reaction and intimacy was more important than sexual intercourse.

Experiences of for not seeking treatment were depicted by three themes including: 'developing daily management strategies', 'developing self perspective on urinary incontinence' and 'establishing patient-doctor relationship'. Two themes for experiences of seeking treatment were apparent: 'overcoming the barriers' and 'anticipation of the future'. Participants did not seek treatment due to taboos surrounding UI which lead them either to self manage or neglect UI. In addition, health care professionals were not open to discussing the subject. However, if participants could overcome the barriers, perceive potential risk of UI, and had high expectations of treatment then treatment-seeking would follow. The findings reflect the need to educate the women on UI and to seek help as this condition can be treated. Health care providers need to be aware of the manifestations of UI among this vulnerable population for early diagnosis and improving their quality of life.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGALAMAN WANITA IRAN PASCAMENOPAUS YANG HIDUP DENGAN
INKONTINENS URINARI MENGGUNAKAN FENOMENOLOGI
HERMENEUTIK**

Oleh

MINOO PARKGOHAR

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Pengerusi: Prof. Tengku Aizan Hamid, Ph.D.

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Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka pengalaman hidup dengan penyakit inkontinens urinari (IU) dalam kalangan wanita Iran pascamenopaus. Secara spesifiknya kajian ini memfokus ke atas (1) makna hidup dengan IU, (2) pengalaman seksualiti dan (3) pengalaman mendapatkan atau tidak mendapatkan rawatan. Fenomenologi hermenutik menjadi asas pendekatan interpretif kajian ini. Temu bual mendalam dan separa berstruktur dilakukan dalam dua sesi dengan 17 orang wanita pascamenopaus yang berumur antara 52 hingga 68 tahun. Temubual telah dilakukan di rumah peserta kajian dan mengambil masa antara 60-90 minit setiap sesi. Transkripsi verbatim daripada rakaman audio temubual telah diterjemahkan daripada Bahasa Farsi kepada Bahasa Inggeris dan diformatkan untuk analisis data. Tema yang timbul dan dikenalpasti sebagai makna IU adalah 'gangguan kefungsi normal', 'sekatan terhadap diri sendiri', dan 'perasaan putus asa'.

‘Gangguan kefungsi normal’ menandakan bagaimana IU telah mencerooboh ruang personal wanita tersebut iaitu emosi, kerohanian, fizikal dan tugas harian. ‘Sekatan terhadap diri sendiri’ bermakna wanita tersebut terpaksa menahan keseronokan dan keperluan serta menghindari hubungan sosial. ‘Perasaan putus asa’ melambangkan pengalaman buruk yang dikaitkan dengan ketidakpastian masa depan, kebergantungan, kesunyian, putus asa dan keinginan untuk mati. Dua tema dorminan muncul berkaitan pengalaman seksualiti: ‘bergantung kepada reaksi suami terhadap IU’ dan ‘takrifan semula seksualiti sebagai keintiman’. Tema ini menggambarkan bahawa pengalaman seksualiti wanita bergantung kepada reaksi suami dan keintiman lebih penting daripada psetubuhan. Pengalaman untuk tidak mendapatkan rawatan telah digambarkan oleh tiga tema termasuk: ‘membangunkan strategi pengurusan diri harian’, ‘membina perspektif diri tentang inkontinens urinari’, dan ‘membentuk hubungan antara pesakit-doktor’. Dua tema untuk pengalaman mendapatkan rawatan menyerlah iaitu: ‘mengatasi halangan’ dan ‘pengharapan masa depan’.

Peserta tidak mendapat rawatan kerana pantang larang mengenai IU yang menyebabkan mereka mengurus sendiri atau mengabaikan IU. Tambahan pula, profesional penjagaan kesihatan tidak bersikap terbuka untuk berbincang mengenai subjek ini. Walaubagaimanapun, jika peserta dapat mengatasi halangan, nampak potensi risiko IU dan mempunyai harapan tinggi terhadap rawatan maka mereka akan mendapat rawatan. Dapatan kajian menggambarkan keperluan untuk mendidik wanita mengenai IU dan untuk mendapatkan rawatan kerana penyakit ini boleh diubati. Pemberi penjagaan kesihatan perlu menyedari pernyataan IU dalam kalangan populasi rentan ini bagi tujuan diagnosis awal dan meningkatkan kualiti hidup mereka.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on date of **viva voce** (25/1/2013) to conduct the final examination of Minoo Pakgozar on her Doctor Philosophy thesis entitled "experiences of postmenopausal iranian women living with UI through hermeneutic phenomenology" in accordance with the Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctoral philosophy in Gerontology.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously and is not currently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

MINOO PAKGOHAR

Date: 25 January 2013

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