



**Menopausal Voice:
A Study of Knowledge, Opinions, and
Experiences of Women Who
Sing through Menopause**

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My Story – What drew me to this topic?

- New health conditions
- Unexplained vocal hindrances
- Aha moment
- Treatments
- Where are the gaps

*(Abitbol et al., 1999; DeMaio, 2013;
Bos, Bozeman and Frazier-Neely, 2020; Waters, 2023)*



 Purpose

This research was designed to assess:

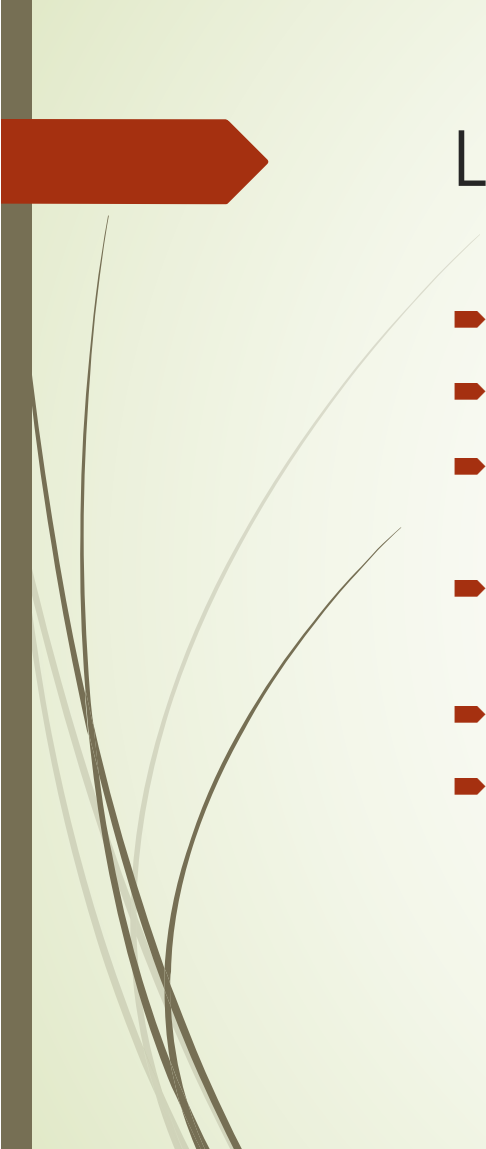
- What is known by singers
- The experiences women are having
- If sufficient mechanisms exist to support them
- With a particular focus on the professional performer

Hormone change during climacterium can cause vocal issues.

Experiences of performers who sing through menopause are not sufficiently documented.

Healthcare and pedagogy practices are elusive and not standardized.

Justification



Learning Objectives

- Improve interviewing skills.
- Learn to design a short survey that assessed baseline knowledge.
- Better understand the connection between menopausal and the voice.
- Better understand structures in place that support the professional vocalist through menopause.
- Identify gaps in the research literature.
- Keep a research journal.

What did I do?



READING



LITERATURE
REVIEW



SURVEY



INTERVIEWS



CODING W/
DELVE



JOURNAL

CONSTRUCTIVISM

MIXED-METHODS

QUALITATIVE

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Methodology

(Gray, 2004; Maxwell, 2010; Creswell and Creswell, 2018)



Ethical Considerations

INSIDER
RESEARCH

BIAS

CONSENT

ANONYMIZATION

ANCILLARY-CARE
OBLIGATIONS

(Walliman, 2001; Merritt, 2011)



LITERATURE REVIEW: Symptoms Impacting the Performer

Vocal

- Physical changes to larynx
 - Muscular atrophy
 - Vocal fold swelling
 - Mucosa changes

(Abitbol et al, 1999; D'haeseleer et al., 2009; Lã and Ardura 2022)

VOCAL CHARACTERISTICS



Decreased vocal quality

Reduced vocal intensity

Roughness, hoarseness, huskiness

Lower F_0

Vocal cord stiffness

Wall/break at the appoggio

Loss of high notes

Lower range

Discomfort

Vocal fatigue

Dryness

(Abitbol et al, 1999; D'haeseleer et al., 2009; Lã and Ardura 2022)



LITERATURE REVIEW: Symptoms Impacting the Performer

Vocal

- Physical changes to larynx
- Vocal characteristics
- Harbinger of menopause

Other Symptoms

- Physical
- Emotional
- Neurological

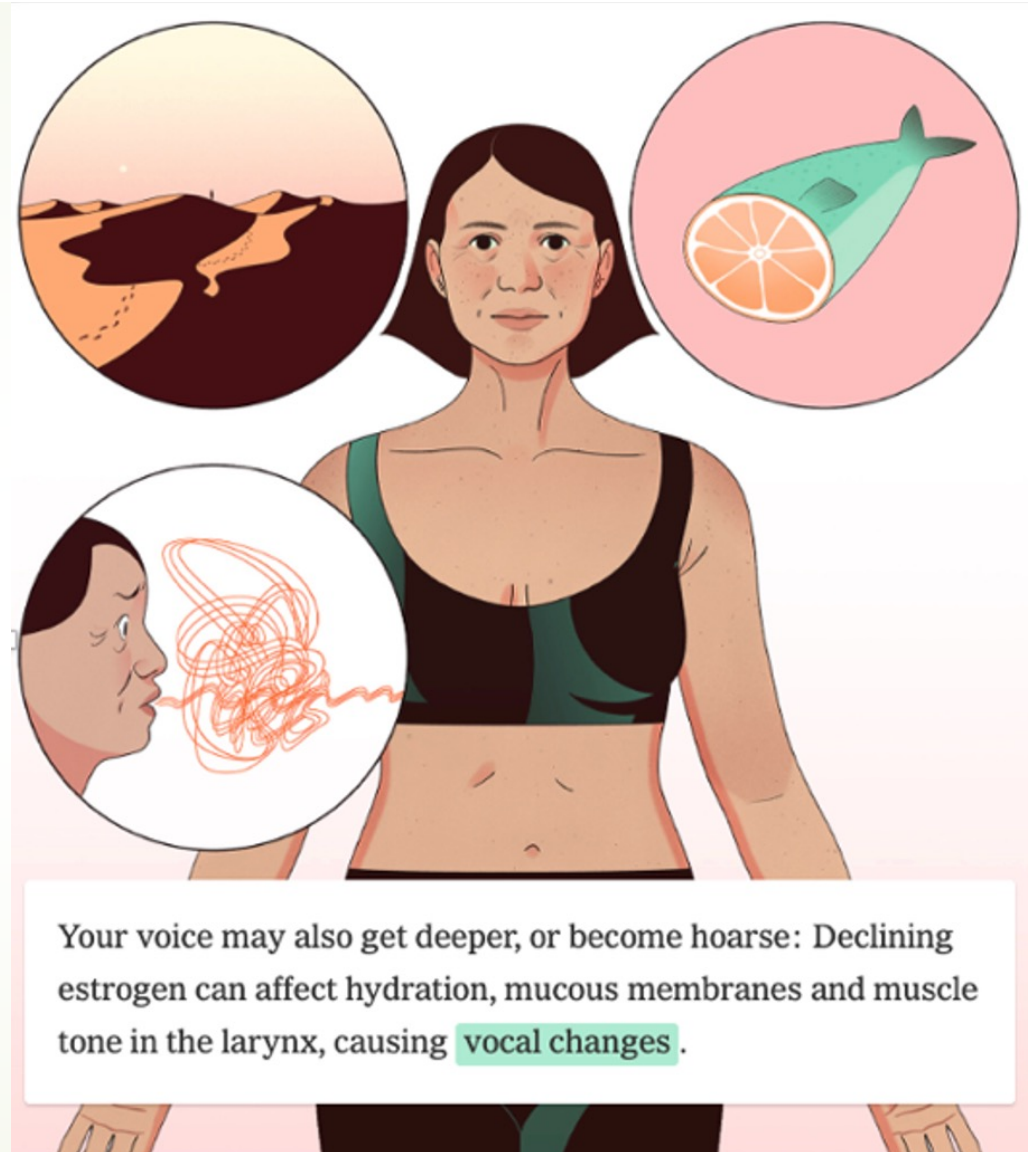
(Crandall, 2019; Bensoussan 2026)

INFORMATION ACCESS: Estrogen and Vocal Change

"I mean there was nobody sort of coaching me or talking me through anything related to menopause, and luckily I think I did have a relatively easy journey, but there was very inadequate attention medically. I still think it is an issue."

- Interview Participant

Image reprinted from the New York Times. What Menopause Does to the Body (Astor and Bagnarelli, 2025).



Your voice may also get deeper, or become hoarse: Declining estrogen can affect hydration, mucous membranes and muscle tone in the larynx, causing vocal changes .

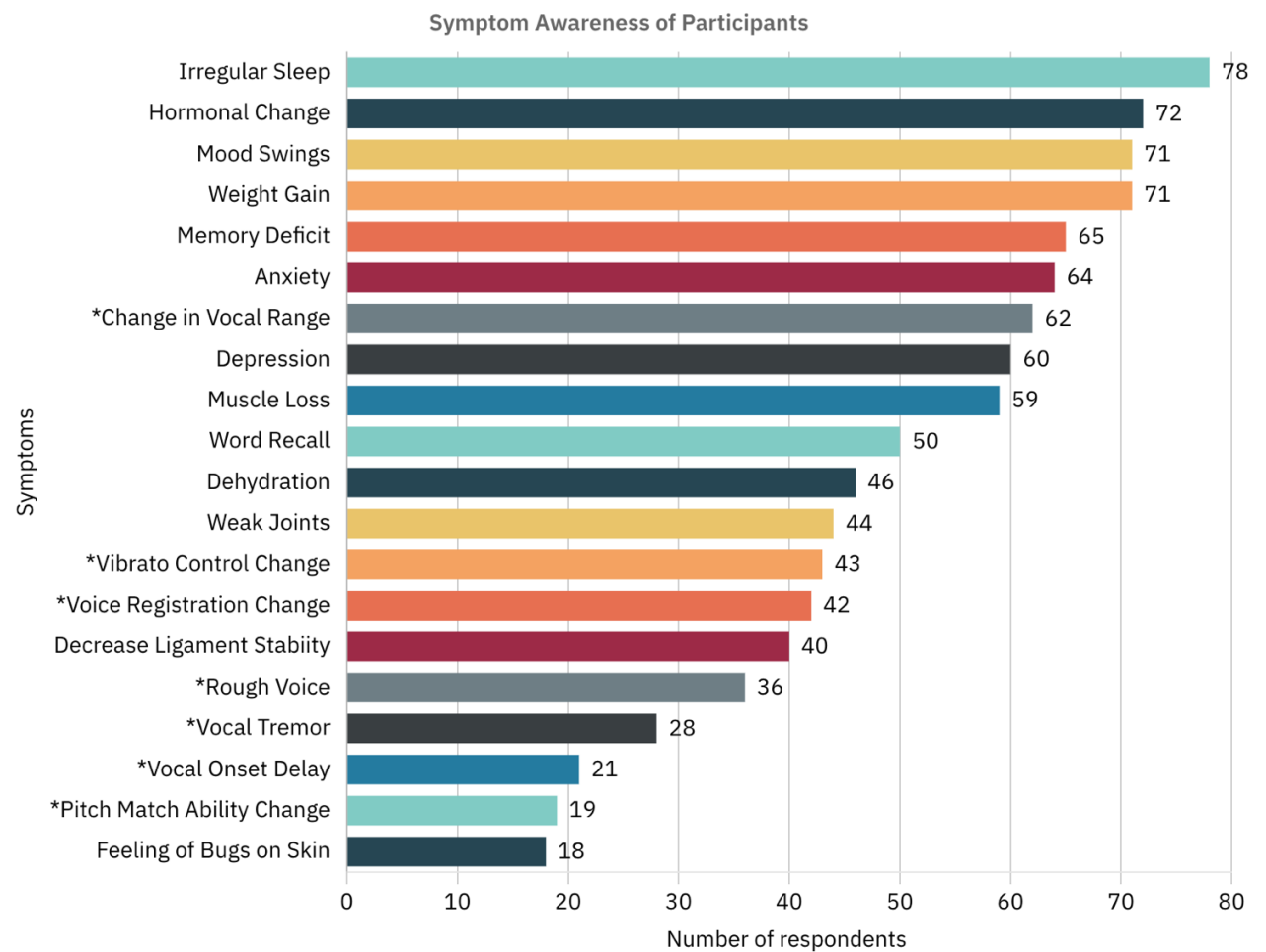


Survey Findings

“Menopause could be an earthquake in a singer's career” – Jean Abitbol

- Majority did not discuss menopause and the voice
- Voice specialists reported talking about it more than singers
- Medical professionals are not the ones talking about it
- Denial of connection
- Vocal symptoms of menopause, menstruation, and hormonal change are not being discussed together
- Many were not aware of vocal symptoms

Symptom Awareness

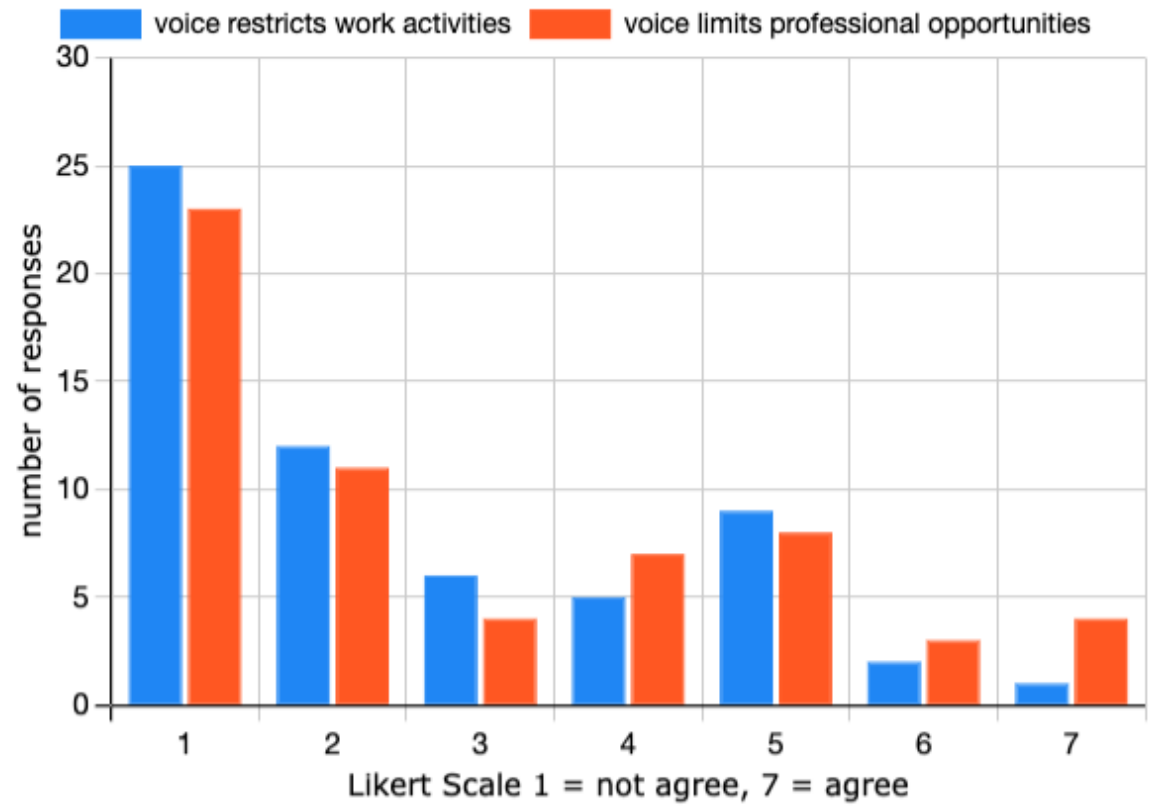




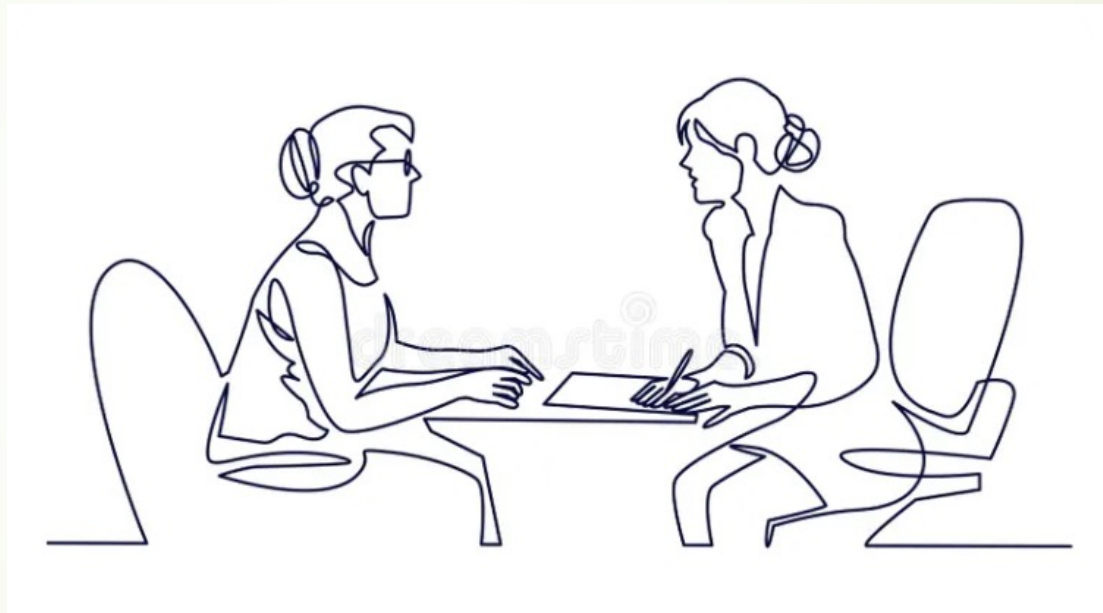
Impact on work

➤ Sample re-defined

Semi-Pro or Professional Singers, aged 32-71, in Peri-Post Menopause



Interviews





Overall experiences fell into one of the following categories:

- **1) debilitating vocal issues in perimenopause or menopause that led to a restriction of professional singing activity**
- *"There's so much inconsistency in my singing right now that I don't trust my voice, I don't trust myself."*
- *"I don't even feel it happening ... but I get a lack of stability of the pitch, or a lack of control. Particularly on my passaggio. Like, if I have to sustain an E... if that comes up in the repertoire, I'm like pour me a drink, because I don't want to do that, because I know it's going to sound terrible."*



“For most of your life, you're able to just open-up your mouth and sing. But it was weird, suddenly my voice decided to do something totally different than what I was hoping would come out... I felt like every time I went for a high note, I was hitting a physical wall, I just couldn't fly up into those notes. It was difficult to get that feeling up into my soft palate and up into my mask, and getting regular stuff to happen.”

➤ **2) general menopausal symptoms that negatively impacted performing, either physically or emotionally**

- *"I was doing a quick change backstage with [a co-star] and we were laughing about something ... and then I just started sobbing. And [she] got so nervous that she ran to get my understudy and said "[I was] flipping out. I don't know what's happening! You better get ready." ... I mean listen I've been doing this for many, many years and I know how to do what I need to do to get the job done. So you know that was a little bit over the top ... she didn't need to go to that extreme. But I do remember my hormones and my emotions were just so crazy at that time."*



3) symptoms deemed insignificant to singing and performance ability

- *"I have always embraced every decade. What is the alternative? We can't go back. So you have to age gracefully ... And I'm not belittling anyone who has had severe issues. I am just going on my experience with menopause. Or maybe it was severe for me and I just ignored it because I just simply did what I needed to do to work. And I got through it without too many fires."*



INTERVIEW FINDINGS: Vocal Issues

➤ *Negatives*

- *Cracks*
- *Lower range*
- *Breath control*
- *Stability*
- *Stigma*

➤ *Positive takes*

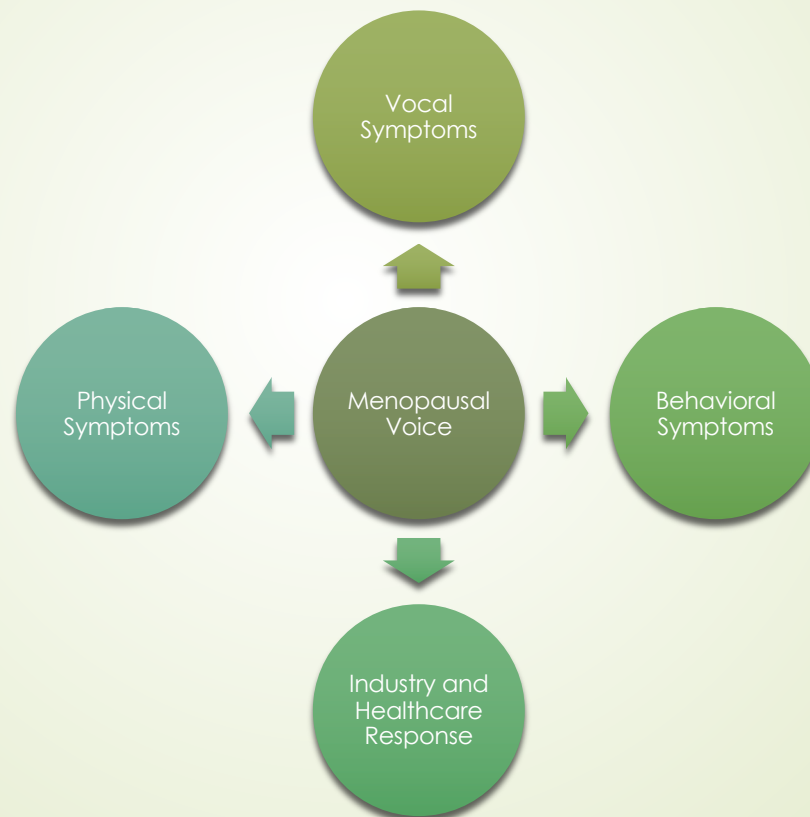
- *Deeper, richer*
- *My true sound*
- *More emotional*
- *Focus on lyrics*



Performance Related Symptoms

- Menstruation
- Hot Flashes
- Pain
- Brain Fog
- Anxiety
- Stigma

Considerations for the performing singer





Lessons Learned

Sample Design

Journal

Timing

Purpose Statement

Type of Data

Roundtables

Unions

Medical Associations

Graduate Schools

Next Steps -
Collaboration



Next Steps - Research

Vocal Training

Memoirs

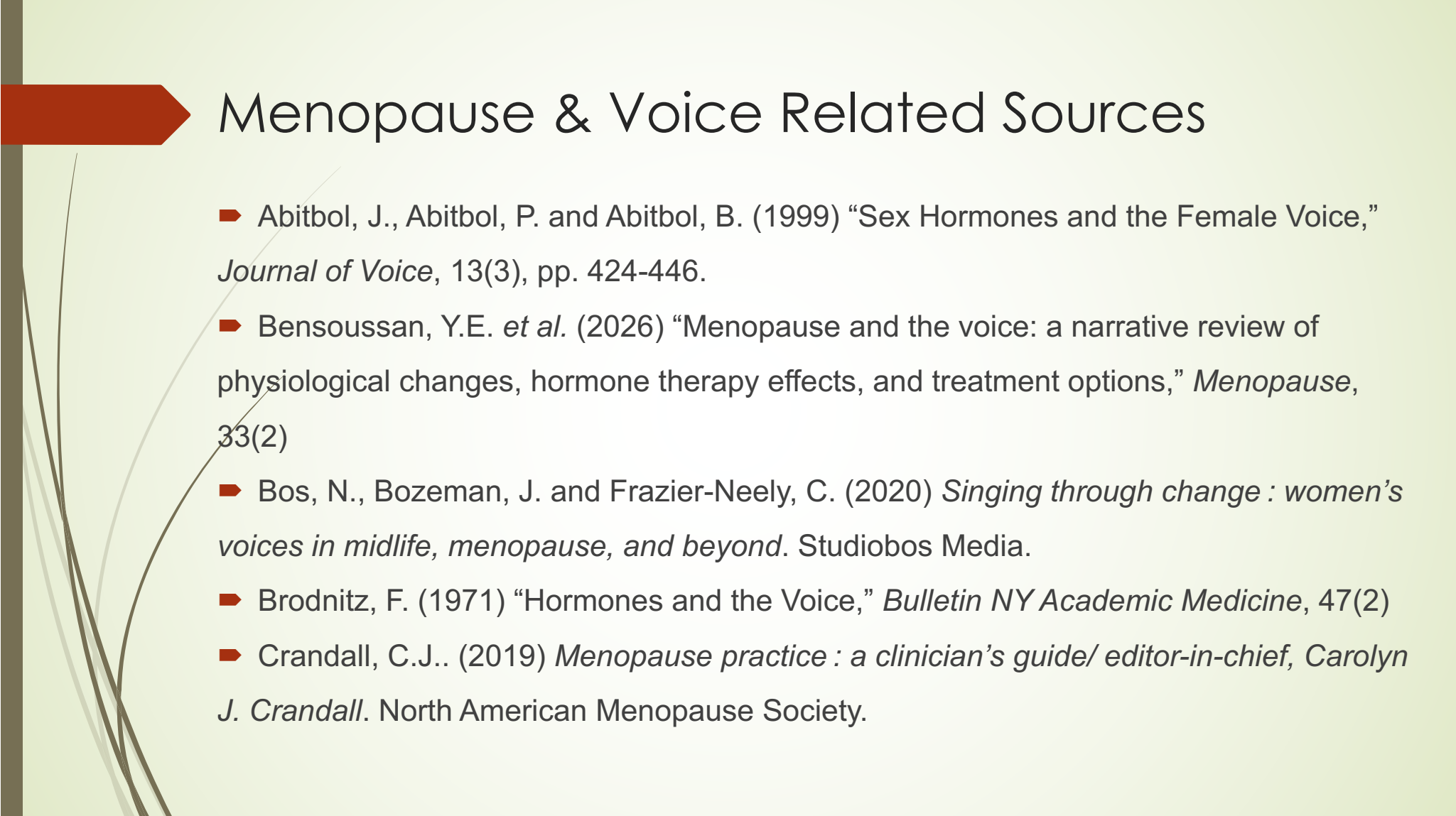
Hormone Therapy

Physician Knowledge Assessment

Collaborative Studies & Presentations

Women want
to talk to
women about
this.





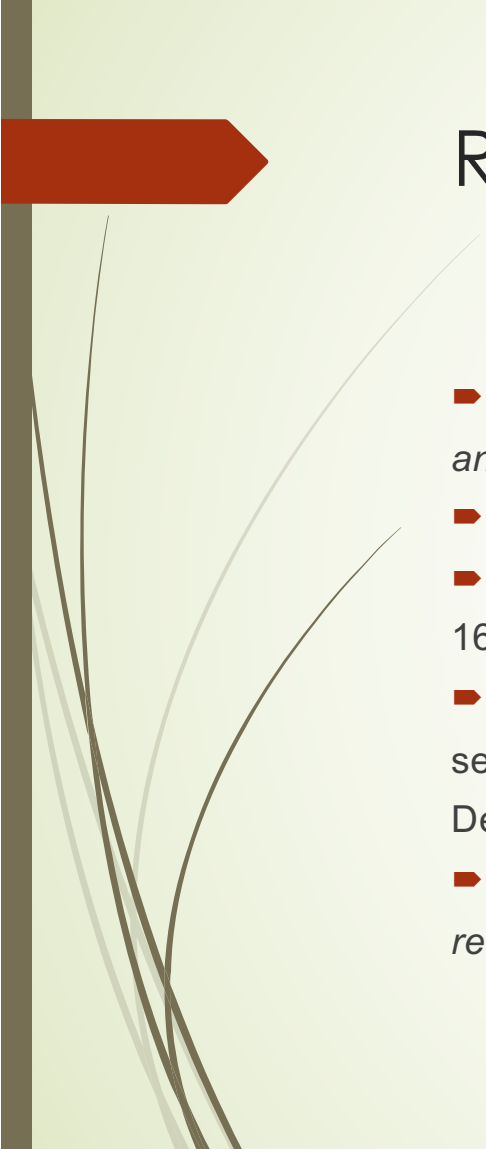
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THANK YOU
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