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**New Zealand Women's Preference for  
Treatment Decision-Making when  
Considering Hormone Replacement  
Therapy.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at Massey  
University.

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## ABSTRACT

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The menopause phase has increasingly been defined as a deficiency disease amenable to treatment. The main medical treatment for menopause is Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). At present very little is known about how New Zealand women make their decisions regarding HRT. What is known is that the medical information concerning HRT is uncertain and doctors are an important factor in the decision-making process. Recent research has shown that there is much dissatisfaction with the service doctors are providing New Zealand women. Much of this dissatisfaction may result from the mismatch of decision-making styles between doctors and women. Accordingly it was necessary to investigate the style preferences of New Zealand women. The aim of the present study was to test the Charles, Gafni & Whelan (1999) theoretical framework for treatment decision-making on New Zealand women considering HRT. The present study seeks to identify three distinct styles of decision-making preference and investigate whether the style preferences are maintained throughout the entire process. One hundred and forty-eight mid-aged women were surveyed about their decisional style preferences. The measure used was designed specifically for the present study and was unique with regard to incorporating stages within the decision-making process. The Charles et al. (1999) framework was found to be an appropriate model for conceptualising the decision-making context of HRT. Support was also found for the dynamic nature of treatment decision-making proposed by Charles et al. (1999) as the three main styles were also found to be amenable to change. The Charles et al. (1999) framework could be a useful educational and assessment tool for doctors and women. Future research is needed to replicate the results of the present study.

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