

Introduction

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the world leading cause of mortality and morbidity. Worldwide 17.7 million people die each year of CVD ¹ and most cases of CVD can be prevented by minimizing behavioral risk factors, e.g. obesity, unhealthy eating (diet), tobacco, and inactivity. Within this context, the menopausal transition is associated with an increase in the incidence and prevalence of CVD which is likely a consequence of the loss of cardio-protective female hormones. People with CVD or one or more risk factors would benefit from early intervention to reduce their risk of disease or death. Substantial evidence has established the value of physical activity in the prevention and treatment of CVD^{1,2}

The overall aims of the present thesis were to investigate cardiometabolic health and risk factors before and after the menopausal transition and to investigate how cardiometabolic health and risk factors are affected by an exercise training intervention.

The thesis includes three papers addressing the effect of menopause and physical activity on cardiometabolic risk factors, cardiac function, structure and myocardial perfusion in women.