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PMS May Spell Menopause Symptoms Later—But Not Hot Flashes

CLEVELAND, Ohio (May 21, 2014)—Having premenstrual syndrome (PMS) before menopause does not mean women will be troubled by hot flashes afterward. But they may face more menopause complaints other than hot flashes, such as trouble with memory and concentration, finds a new study published online in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

The research team at the Helsinki University Central Hospital and Folkhälsan Research Institute in Helsinki, Finland, are the first to show a link between PMS and a worse quality of life after menopause. They uncovered the link by asking 120 healthy postmenopausal women who had not taken hormones to answer standard questionnaires about the premenstrual symptoms they had had and about their current health. The investigators also had the volunteers keep a diary of their hot flashes, recording how many they had and the severity of each.

Nearly 90% of the women recalled having PMS. For half of these women, the symptoms interfered with work, home or social life, and about 40% of these women rated their PMS as moderate or severe. But the analysis showed that hot flashes and their severity had no significant relationship to PMS. The symptoms were, however, linked with depression, poor sleep, feeling less attractive, and especially with memory and concentration problems after menopause.

Whether these results mean that PMS and menopause complaints other than hot flashes have a common cause, such as a similar change in regulation of the autonomic nervous system or genes that predispose to both, are topics for future research.

Meanwhile, says NAMS Executive Director Margery Gass, MD, “Women who are troubled by PMS can be reassured that it doesn’t mean bothersome hot flashes are inevitable later.”

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Founded in 1989, The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) is North America’s leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the health and quality of life of all women during midlife and beyond through an understanding of menopause and healthy aging. Its multidisciplinary membership of 2,000 leaders in the field—including clinical and basic science experts from medicine, nursing, sociology, psychology, nutrition, anthropology, epidemiology, pharmacy, and education—makes NAMS uniquely qualified to serve as the definitive resource for health professionals and the public for accurate, unbiased information about menopause and healthy aging. To learn more about NAMS, visit www.menopause.org.