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More Than One-Third of Perimenopausal Women Develop Insomnia

New study shows symptoms escalating over time

CLEVELAND, Ohio (October 14, 2015)—Millions of women may likely be sleep-deprived. It's already a known fact that women are more predisposed to insomnia. Now a new study presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) earlier this month suggests that perimenopausal women have an even greater risk for developing insomnia. Considering that perimenopause will affect roughly 500 million women within the next decade, that's a lot of tired women.

What's worse is that the study found that insomnia symptoms are likely to get worse and more prevalent in the later stages of perimenopause (the transition period to menopause). In fact, the odds of having any one symptom of insomnia were 1.3 times greater for those in late stage versus early stage of perimenopause. The odds of developing chronic insomnia were 1.5 times greater for those in perimenopause than pre-perimenopause.

"We found that there was a lot of research regarding insomnia in general but very little that addressed the insomnia trajectory in one of the higher risk groups of women—those transitioning to menopause," says Dr. Colleen Ciano of the College of Nursing at The Pennsylvania State University and lead author of the study.

The most common sleep-related complaints include: difficulty falling asleep, waking after sleep onset, and sleep quality. Of the 3,302 study participants, more than one-third suffered from insomnia, reporting "awakenings" as the most frequent insomnia symptom.

"Given the strong link between insomnia and such poor health outcomes as heart disease and obesity, this study offers valuable insight for physicians who are treating middle-aged patients and considering various preventative treatment options," says Dr. Wulf Utian, NAMS executive director.

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.