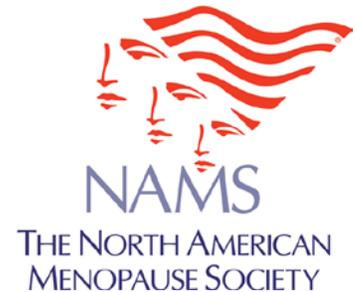


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Can Counting Calories Actually Help Women Live Longer and Healthier?

New study documents benefits of caloric restriction but warns of possible link to osteoporosis

CLEVELAND, Ohio (October 5, 2016)—It comes as little surprise that eating healthier can result in increased longevity and decreased illnesses commonly associated with aging. But a new study from Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey demonstrates that along with a lot of benefits comes an increased risk of osteoporosis when calorie intake is reduced. The study results will be presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) in Orlando, October 5-8.

For nearly 100 years, doctors have been studying the effect of reduced calorie consumption on the aging process. This new study reviews previous articles and data to determine whether the antiaging benefits are sufficient enough to support the introduction of the age-old practice of caloric restriction into the counseling of postreproductive aged women.

As would be expected, the data compiled suggest promising results for postmenopausal women who follow a calorically restricted diet. Specifically, this type of diet inhibits the action of the mTOR pathway, which is linked to ailments of aging such as Alzheimer disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes mellitus, and heart disease. It was also shown that inhibition of mTOR via caloric restriction directly reduced mammary tumor growth in mice, supporting the relationship between obesity and breast cancer. Another study demonstrated a link between reducing calories and limiting muscle deterioration, which is important in helping to prevent falls that are common in the elderly population.

Surprising, however, was a recent paper that examined young adults who were calorically restricted for 2 years and experienced higher rates of bone loss.

“Although much of the data supported caloric restriction as a means to increase longevity and decrease the incidence of illnesses associated with aging, there is now evidence indicating that such restriction could increase the chances of osteoporosis,” says Gloria Bachmann, MD, from Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and lead author of the study. “What we don’t yet know is whether or not exercise could help prevent osteoporosis, thus creating the need for additional research in this area.”

“This study highlights the need for healthcare providers to have meaningful conversations about caloric restriction with their menopausal patients, because we know that weight gain is a major problem during this life transition,” says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director.

Drs. Bachmann and Pinkerton are available for interviews before the presentation at the Annual Meeting.

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.