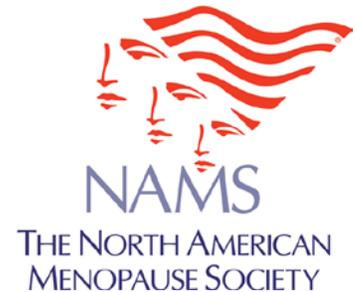


**EMBARGOED UNTIL  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017**

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**Older Age at Menopause and Use of Hormone Therapy Produce Increased Risk  
of Hearing Loss**

*Unexpected results of new study show higher risk of hearing loss  
when using oral hormone therapy for longer duration*

CLEVELAND, Ohio (May 10, 2017)—It has long been suspected that menopause and the use of hormones had a direct effect on hearing. However, findings from previous studies have been conflicting, with some suggesting that hearing worsens at menopause but that there is benefit with hormone therapy (HT). Now results from the first large population study conducted to assess the association show that older age at natural menopause and the use of oral HT are each associated with a higher risk of hearing loss. The study outcomes are being published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

Hearing loss is a common problem, with nearly 48 million Americans already affected. This number will grow as the population continues to age. Because hearing loss becomes more common after menopause, the point in a woman's life when estrogen and progesterone levels fall off, it has long been assumed that HT would help reduce the risk of hearing loss.

The article, "Menopause and postmenopausal hormone therapy and risk of hearing loss," details the largest study to date that examines the independent relations between menopause and postmenopause use of HT and risk of self-reported hearing loss.

After reviewing self-reported hearing loss in 80,972 women involved in the Nurses' Health Study II, researchers found that the use of oral HT in postmenopausal women, and for longer durations, was associated with an even higher risk of hearing loss. The finding that older age at natural menopause was also associated with a higher risk of hearing loss was unexpected, and the mechanisms for this association were unclear.

"The finding from this observational study that women who underwent menopause at a later age and used oral hormone therapy had greater hearing loss was unexpected but should lead to more testing in a randomized, clinical trial," says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director. "Information about the potential effect on hearing is important to include in a discussion regarding the risks and benefits of hormone therapy for symptomatic menopausal women."

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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](http://www.menopause.org).