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Study Documents Continued Decline in Use of Hormone Therapy by Canadian Women

Age, education, ethnic background, and variety of risk factors affect usage rates

CLEVELAND, Ohio (August 21, 2017)—Ever since menopause was first discussed publicly, the debate over the use of hormone therapy (HT) has monopolized headlines. Recognized as the most effective option for managing hot flashes and other menopause symptoms, the use of HT has continued to decline, largely as a result of the data released from the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) in 2002. New study results published in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS), documents the decline, along with the factors affecting a Canadian woman’s likelihood of using HT.

The article “Hormone therapy use in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging: a cross-sectional analysis” reports on the study results regarding the prevalence and the factors associated with HT use in Canadian women. Specifically, 9.5% of the sample reported current use of HT, whereas 21.9% reported past use. The main factors associated with a *lower* likelihood of current HT use were older age (80+ years), nonwhite ethnic background, current employment, regular smoking, obesity, and breast cancer. In contrast, alcohol consumption and the presence of allergies or mood disorders were positively associated with current HT use, as was the case for women with an overall healthier profile.

The low usage statistic contrasts dramatically with the large number of women who suffer with menopause symptoms, including hot flashes, one of the most commonly reported symptoms. It is estimated that 80% of women transitioning through menopause will experience hot flashes and/or night sweats. Recent data suggest that hot flashes will persist for an average of 7.4 years, with more than 30% of women experiencing hot flashes for 10 years or more.

The Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging is the first to present a detailed description of the patterns of HT use in Canadian. Although there were differences in age ranges and survey methods, the findings suggest that the overall prevalence of HT use in Canadian women has somewhat stabilized over the past decade after the initial rapid fall after 2002.

“NAMS recently affirmed the safety of hormone therapy for most women aged younger than 60 years or within 10 years of menopause onset who have bothersome symptoms or are at elevated risk of fracture. Fear should no longer keep women from considering hormone therapy if they need it,” says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director.

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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.