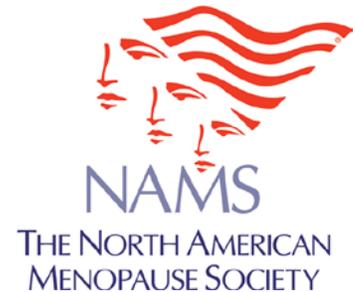


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Painful Sex and Bladder Problems Take Toll on Women's Libido During Menopause

New study provides added insights as to why women become less sexually active as they age

CLEVELAND, Ohio (October 11, 2017)—As women age, sexual activity typically declines. But that doesn't necessarily mean they are no longer interested in sex. The problem for many is physical. A new study demonstrates the impact on sexual activity of postmenopausal women as a result of vulvovaginal atrophy and lower urinary tract problems. The study results will be presented during The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, October 11-14.

In recent years the medical community adopted the terminology "genitourinary syndrome of menopause" (GSM) to more accurately refer to the collective vaginal and bladder problems that affect many women during menopause. In simpler terms, GSM includes symptoms of painful sex as a result of a thinning of the vaginal walls, along with bladder problems that can lead to urine leakage during sexual activity, as well as during other unpredictable times. As part of this new study, researchers assessed the impact of these symptoms on a woman's ability to be sexually active and enjoy the sexual experience.

More than 1,500 women completed a questionnaire regarding their sexual activity. While both vulvovaginal atrophy and bladder problems negatively impacted sexual enjoyment and frequency of activity, the fear of experiencing pain during sex was reported as a reason for avoiding or restricting activity more often (≈20%) than bladder problems, such as fear of wetting the bed or having to interrupt activity to go to the bathroom (≈9%).

"Our findings underscore the need to further expand the sexual history after a woman reports that she is not currently sexually active," says Dr. Amanda Clark, lead author of the study from the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, Oregon.

"This study provides just one more reason why healthcare providers need to have an open and honest discussion with peri- and postmenopausal women so that appropriate treatments options can be evaluated," says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director.

Drs. Clark 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.