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The North American Menopause Society

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**Childhood Adversity May Play a Role in Executive Function and Mood After Early Removal of Ovaries**

*New study links childhood adversity with a woman's increased risk of executive dysfunction and mood symptoms after risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy in women with high-risk mutations*

CLEVELAND, Ohio (March 18, 2020)—Nearly one-third of women who choose to have their ovaries removed before the natural age of menopause are susceptible to negative mood and executive dysfunction. A new study shows that a woman's risk for such disorders may be linked with the degree of childhood adversity she experienced. Study results are published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

Women with mutations in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* susceptibility genes are more likely to undergo a risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy in order to help lower their risk of breast and ovarian cancers. The premature loss of ovarian hormones caused by the procedure has been shown to increase the risk of central nervous system impairment and an overall decline in quality of life. Previous studies have shown that women who have their ovaries removed before natural menopause are at increased risk of dementia and cognitive dysfunction. More specifically, the largest declines in cognitive performance after oophorectomy occur in the executive functioning domains.

This new study of cognitive function in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutation carriers who underwent risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy examined the association between childhood adversity and executive function as well as the role of mood. Women with higher levels of childhood adversity reported more symptoms of dysfunction and also performed worse on executive function tasks.

These results could provide valuable insights to healthcare providers when they are counseling women who would benefit from risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy. Assessment of childhood adversity may help identify women who are more likely to experience executive function difficulties and mood symptoms after surgery and provide an opportunity to treat these difficulties before symptoms negatively affect quality of life.

Study results appear in the article "Executive function after risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutation carriers: does current mood and early life adversity matter?"

"Assessment of childhood adversity and mood symptoms in women undergoing risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy in the setting of high-risk mutations in the *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes may help identify women who are more likely to experience difficulty with executive function and allow for management of mood symptoms before they negatively affect quality of life," says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit [www.menopause.org](http://www.menopause.org).

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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).