

## EDITORIAL

### Pauline M. Maki, PhD 2014-2015 NAMS President

**D**r. Pauline M. Maki was elected as the 2014-2015 President of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) in Washington, DC, during the Society's 25th Annual Meeting held from October 15 to 18, 2014. She succeeds Dr. Jan Shifren and will serve a 1-year term.

Dr. Maki is a professor at the Departments of Psychiatry and Psychology, Director of Women's Mental Health Research, and the senior director of research at the Center for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC).

Dr. Maki's research has focused on women's mental and cognitive health. She is interested in sex differences in cognitive and psychiatric disorders, particularly risk factors and protective factors that alter women's risk of cognitive decline and affective disorders. A central focus of Dr. Maki's research is improving the lives of women through a better understanding of how menopause stage and symptoms affect cognitive performance, brain function, and response to stress. Her program of clinical research includes the study of such interventions as hormone therapy, soy, black cohosh, and other nonhormone therapies intended to maintain memory and mood.

Dr. Maki has played an important role in several critical studies related to menopause, women's cognitive health and mood, and women with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). While serving at the Intramural Research Program of the National Institute on Aging, she was a co-principal investigator for the Women's Health Initiative Study of Cognitive Aging (WHISCA) and Cognition in the Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene (Co-STAR). At UIC, Dr. Maki spearheaded the addition of a longitudinal cognitive test battery into the Women's Interagency HIV Study (WIHS), the largest longitudinal study of the natural and treated history of HIV in women. She also studies how drug abuse affects cognition and brain function in women with HIV and serves as executive committee member and leader of the HIV and Aging Emphasis Group for the Chicago Developmental Center for AIDS Research. She has numerous publications on hormones and cognitive function in women, has won a number of National Institutes of Health awards for research and service, and is a frequent international and national speaker on women's cognitive health.

Dr. Maki's interest in women's health developed through a commitment to feminism and early research experiences: "As a feminist, I was strongly motivated to further my training in psychology and neuroscience to improve the lives of women. When I was a postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins,

the first studies linking use of hormone therapy to a reduction in Alzheimer's disease were being published. Knowing that women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, I became committed early on to identifying factors that alter risk for dementia and cognitive decline in women. My first investigations as a postdoctoral fellow were a set of parallel randomized clinical trials—one of hormone therapy on cognition in older women and another of testosterone therapy on cognition in older men." Later, as a postdoctoral fellow with Dr. Susan Resnick at the National Institute on Aging, she added a neuroimaging component to that behavioral study. Their early clinical studies identified certain brain regions, notably the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex, as neural targets of hormone therapy in women. "I've been building on that finding ever since and extending my research to affective disorders since women are twice as likely as men to receive a diagnosis of depression," she says.

Dr. Maki has a special research interest in HIV and improving the lives of women with HIV. "About 75% of HIV-infected individuals in the United States are men, so cognitive studies in HIV are dominated by HIV-infected men, particularly by men who have sex with men," she says. "The findings from those men cannot necessarily be generalized to women because there are known sex differences in cognition and because HIV-infected women have more risk factors for cognitive decline, including low educational attainment, higher rates of poverty, greater mental health challenges, and greater exposure to abuse and trauma." Dr. Maki's research with the Women's Interagency HIV Study focuses on finding possible sex differences in the pattern of cognitive impairment in women, much of that caused by HIV interacting with a variety of factors, including low educational attainment, drug abuse, and daily stress. "Menopause also influences the psychological health of HIV-infected women," she says. "For example, we found that HIV-infected women, like uninfected women, show an elevated risk of depressive symptoms during the menopausal transition. When women with HIV become depressed, their health deteriorates in part because they are less likely to adhere to their HIV medication regimens."

Dr. Maki's involvement with NAMS started with an invitation to speak on the timing hypothesis in a plenary symposium at the 2003 Annual Meeting. "After that initial



experience at NAMS, I started attending the Annual Meeting regularly and was buoyed by the enthusiasm, guidance, and mentorship of the giants in menopause research, including Drs. Wulf Utian, Thomas Clarkson, Lila and Richard Nachtigall, Michelle Warren, Victor Henderson, David Archer, and so many others," she says. "It was Dr. Clarkson who suggested in 2008 that I become a member of the NAMS Research Affairs Committee, which I later chaired, and also he recommended me for service on the Board of Trustees. I consider NAMS to be my home organization, and I continue to be inspired by these giants and by my many friends and colleagues at NAMS."

Dr. Maki is active in numerous other professional societies and organizations, including the International Menopause Society, the National Network of Depression Centers, and the Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH) program, for which she serves as program director. She serves on the editorial board of *Menopause*.

Having been a mentee herself, Dr. Maki greatly values the opportunity to be a mentor to others in women's health research. She currently mentors four assistant professors at UIC, who are funded through individual Career Development (K) awards to pursue research careers in women's health. She also mentors several other assistant professors in women's health research for the BIRCWH, a group mentorship program in women's health. Her mentorship activities extend to post-doctoral fellows, PhD students, undergraduate students, and high school students in women's health. At NAMS, she was the founding director of the NAMS Mentorship Program, a major new initiative that began in 2009 and has paired 21 junior investigators in women's health research with 21 senior mentors from the NAMS membership for a 2-year mentorship experience.

"As President, I will work with Executive Director Dr. Margery Gass and the Board of Trustees on strategic initiatives aimed at furthering our mission to serve as the definitive, independent, evidence-based resource on midlife women's health, menopause, and healthy aging for healthcare professionals, researchers, the media, and the general public. It is imperative that we partner with the NAMS membership in identifying priority areas. A primary focus of my efforts will be to address a request from the membership for a mentorship program in the practice of menopause medicine. By building on the success of the NAMS Mentorship Program in research, we can better serve our membership needs related to clinical practice," Dr. Maki says.

"A second focus of my term will be to expand NAMS educational and outreach efforts in the area of women's mental health. We aim to raise awareness of the importance of screening for depression and anxiety disorders during the transition by educating our members and the public on effective strategies for treating mental health issues during the transition," she says.

"I aim to continue to further the research mission of NAMS and to work with Dr. Rebecca Thurston, Chair of the NAMS

Research Affairs Committee, on ways to expand this mission," she adds. "I look forward to working with Dr. Peter Schnatz, Scientific Program Chair for the 2015 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas. We hope to highlight sexual health as a major theme of that meeting and to include special sessions on the health of sexual minorities."

Dr. Maki received her PhD in experimental psychology, with emphasis on the neuroscience of aging, from the University of Minnesota in 1994. She received postgraduate training in the dementias of aging at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and in neuroimaging at the National Institute on Aging. In 2010, she completed the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine fellowship program for women in academic medicine.

"I am very pleased to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Pauline Maki, NAMS' 24th President," says NAMS Executive Director Margery L.S. Gass, MD, NCMP. "I have had the pleasure of working with her on the Board of Trustees since 2009, and I am very impressed with all she has contributed to the Society and to women's health. Dr. Maki personifies NAMS' commitment to research in the field of menopause. Her expertise in cognitive and mental health is vital to women's quality of life. I look forward to a close collaboration with Dr. Maki in the coming year."

Dr. Maki has been a member of the NAMS Board of Trustees since 2009 and is the immediate past Chair of the NAMS Research Affairs Committee. As Chair of that committee, she helped to spearhead and implement three successful symposia funded by the National Institutes of Health and held in conjunction with the NAMS Annual Meeting: *Depressive Symptoms and Cognitive Complaints in the Menopausal Transition* (2009), *STRAW +10: Addressing the Unfinished Agenda of Staging Reproductive Aging* (2011), and *The Science of Thermoregulation and Vasomotor Symptoms: New Targets for Research and Treatment* (2014).

Dr. Maki lives in Chicago. She and her husband, Christopher Wrobel, are proud parents to 5-year-old AnaSophia Wrobel. "We delight in her inquisitive mind, nimble sense of humor, scientific curiosity, and sweet demeanor," she says.

Being an academic researcher in the field of women's health has been her life's dream: "I am able to spend my days asking questions of the universe, finding answers to those questions, collaborating with great minds to think about these issues, applying those answers to improve the lives of women, and then traveling the world to talk about these findings."

"NAMS and its membership play an invaluable role in disseminating the richness of our collective understanding of women's health," says Dr. Maki. "I am so very honored to have the privilege of serving as NAMS President and continuing this valuable mission."

*The Editors*