



# Menopause

The Journal of The North American Menopause Society

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**Judy Cerne**, President & CEO  
McKinney Advertising and Public Relations  
Penton Media Building  
1300 East Ninth Street, Suite 1520  
Cleveland, OH 44114  
Phone: (216) 621-5133/ Fax: (216) 621-1181  
E-mail: [jcerne@mckinneyad.com](mailto:jcerne@mckinneyad.com)

## **Contents of the July-August 2007 Issue of *Menopause: The Journal of The North American Menopause Society***

VOLUME 14, NUMBER 4, 2007

### **Editorials**

**Perspective on menopausal vasomotor symptoms, CAM, and the SWAN**  
JoAnn V. Pinkerton, MD and Lisa M. Pastore, PhD

**Isoflavones and cardiovascular risk in postmenopausal women: no free lunch**  
Cynthia A. Stuenkel, MD

**Endogenous androgens and cardiovascular risk**  
Robert A. Wild, MD, PhD, MPH

**Directly comparing routes of administration and types of hormone therapy on risk markers for breast cancer**  
James K. Pru, PhD

### **Articles**

**Cross-sectional analysis of specific complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use by racial/ethnic group and menopausal status: the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN)**

Ellen B. Gold, PhD, Yali Bair, PhD, Guili Zhang, PhD, Jessica Utts, PhD, Gail A. Greendale, MD, Dawn Upchurch, PhD, Laura Chyu, MA, Barbara Sternfeld, PhD, and Shelley Adler, PhD

Data were analyzed from 2,118 women who completed the sixth annual visit in the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN), a multisite, multiethnic, longitudinal study of midlife women. More than half of the women used some type of complementary and alternative medicine; use of most types of complementary and alternative medicine differed significantly by race/ethnicity, sociodemographic factors, comorbidities, and health behaviors but was largely unrelated to menopausal status or symptom reporting.

**Effect of 6 months of exercise and isoflavone supplementation on clinical cardiovascular risk factors in obese postmenopausal women: a randomized, double-blind study**

Mylene Aubertin-Leheudre, MSc, Christine Lord, MSc, Abdelouahed Khalil, PhD, and Isabelle J. Dionne, PhD

It is unknown whether isoflavones combined with an aerobic program could prevent cardiovascular disease risks. This study demonstrated that 6 months of exercise combined with isoflavones improved body composition and sex hormone-binding globulin levels to a greater extent than exercise alone.

**Endogenous androgen levels and cardiovascular risk profile in women across the adult life span**

Robin J. Bell, MD, PhD, Sonia L. Davison, MD, PhD, Mary-Anne Papalia, MD, Dean P. McKenzie, BA (Hons), and Susan R. Davis, MD, PhD

In a cross-sectional study of non-healthcare-seeking adult women we found that sex-hormone-binding globulin (SHBG) made an independent contribution to variations in serum levels of C-reactive protein, high-density lipoprotein and triglycerides, providing support for the independent predictive value of low SHBG for cardiovascular risk profile.

**Effects of estradiol with oral or intravaginal progesterone on risk markers for breast cancer in a postmenopausal monkey model**

Charles E. Wood, DVM, PhD, Regine L. Sitruk-Ware, MD, Yun-Yen Tsong, PhD, Thomas C. Register, PhD, Cynthia J. Lees, DVM, PhD, and J. Mark Cline, DVM, PhD

Micronized progesterone delivered by vaginal ring is readily absorbed into the systemic circulation and produces more stable serum concentrations than oral administration. However, no significant differences were found between standard doses of oral and intravaginal progesterone (P4) on breast epithelial proliferation. These findings do not support the idea that intravaginal P4 has an inherently safer risk profile than oral P4 in the postmenopausal breast.

**Effects of the phytoestrogen genistein on hot flashes, endometrium, and vaginal epithelium in postmenopausal women: a 1-year randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study**

Rosario D'Anna, MD, Maria Letizia Cannata, MD, Marco Atteritano, MD, Francesco Cancellieri, MD, Francesco Corrado, MD, Giovanni Baviera, PhD, Onofrio Triolo, MD, Francesco Antico, MD, Agostino Gaudio, MD, Nicola Frisina, MD, Alessandra Bitto, MD, Francesca Polito, PhD, Letteria Minutoli, MD, Domenica Altavilla, PhD, Herbert Marini, MD, and Francesco Squadrito, MD

In a 12-month, prospective, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study, the phytoestrogen genistein has been shown to be effective on vasomotor symptoms without adverse effects on endometrium.

**Raloxifene improves the ovariectomy-induced impairment in endothelium-dependent vasodilation**

Kazuhiro Takahashi, MD, PhD, Akiko Mori-Abe, MD, PhD, Keiko Takata, MD, Tsuyoshi Ohta, MD, Jun Kawagoe, MD, PhD, Seiji Tsutsumi, MD, PhD, Masahide Ohmichi, MD, PhD, and Hirohisa Kurachi, MD, PhD

Raloxifene rapidly restored the flow-mediated dilatation which was impaired after surgical menopause. Raloxifene may be effective for ameliorating and maintaining the endothelial function in premenopausal women who undergo ovariectomy.

Articles from the Workshop on "Cross-cultural Comparisons of Midlife and Aging"

### **Cross-cultural comparisons: midlife, aging, and menopause**

Carla Makhlouf Obermeyer, PhD and Lynnette Leidy Sievert, PhD

This summary introduces 15 papers that examine menopause, midlife, and aging from a cross-cultural perspective, reviews the comparative method, differentiates between etic and emic data, and questions whether there are core menopausal symptoms across research sites.

### **Potential use of biomarkers for analyzing interpopulation and cross-cultural variability in reproductive aging**

Gillian R. Bentley, PhD and Shanthi Muttukrishna, PhD

This article summarizes the significant variability that exists between women and populations in many physiological aspects of reproductive aging. It also reviews a number of biomarkers that are useful for measuring reproductive aging as well as problems associated with their use.

### **Conducting cross-cultural research in teams and the search for the “culture-proof” variable**

Patricia Draper, PhD

This article addresses the problems researchers face when they must render information collected in different cultural settings into coding categories that encompass all the settings.

### **A symptomatic approach to understanding women’s health experiences: a cross-cultural comparison of women aged 20 to 70 years**

Lorraine Dennerstein, AO, DPM, PhD, MBBS, FRANZCP, Philippe Lehert, DrEg, PhD, Patricia E. Koochaki, PhD, BA, Alessandra Graziottin, MD, Sandra Leiblum, PhD, and Jeanne Leventhal Alexander, MD, FABPN, FRCPC, FAPA, FACPsych

Seven symptoms were linked to indicators of ovarian hormonal depletion: hot flashes; night sweats; poor memory; difficulty sleeping; aches in the neck, head, or shoulders; vaginal dryness; and difficulty with sexual arousal.

### **Cross-cultural comparisons of health-related quality of life in Australian and Japanese midlife women: the Australian and Japanese Midlife Women’s Health Study**

Debra J. Anderson, PhD and Toyoko Yoshizawa, PhD

Research suggests that there are significant differences between Australian and Japanese midlife women in health-related quality of life and some of the factors that contribute to these areas. It is important that consideration be given to incorporating the same tool within the cross-cultural design of studies so that comparisons between cultures and patterns of healthy aging can be made.

### **Disentangling cultural issues in quality of life data**

Nancy E. Avis, PhD and Alicia Colvin, MPH

This article examines the impact of acculturation, as defined by language use, in explaining ethnic differences in reporting health-related quality of life.

### **Are the effects of risk factors for timing of menopause modified by age? Results from a British birth cohort study**

Gita Mishra, PhD, Rebecca Hardy, PhD, and Diana Kuh, PhD

This study finds that the early life factors of being breast-fed and having higher cognitive ability independently influence age at menopause, whereas the effects of weight at 2 years, parental divorce during childhood, and mother’s age at menopause varied according to the women’s age at menopause.

### **The roles of biologic and nonbiologic factors in cultural differences in vasomotor symptoms measured by surveys**

Sybil L. Crawford, PhD

Cultural differences in vasomotor symptom reporting on surveys reflect both differences in the underlying

biology, which are likely to influence vasomotor symptom occurrence, and differences in nonbiologic sociocultural factors such as attitudes toward menopause, which are likely to be related to vasomotor symptom perception and reporting. Consequently, it is important to consider interactions of culture and biology in studies of vasomotor symptoms.

### **“I take the good with the bad, and I moisturize”: defying middle age in the new millennium**

Yewoubdar Beyene, PhD, Catherine Gilliss, DNSc, and Kathryn Lee, PhD

This qualitative study reports on how a premenopausal cohort of women in their forties understand “middle age.” Menopause is understood as a natural event that is out of women’s control, whereas their health and appearance were deemed something they can and should control.

### **Variation in sweating patterns: implications for studies of hot flashes through skin conductance**

Lynnette Leidy Sievert, PhD

Women in Puebla, Mexico demonstrated a higher rate of concordance between subjective and objective (sternal) measures of hot flashes and a significantly lower mean score for false negative measures compared to women in Amherst, Massachusetts. Although women in Mexico were more likely to describe hot flashes on the back of their neck, the addition of nuchal monitoring did not increase the rate of concordance between subjective and objective measures within the Mexican sample.

### **Chilliness: a vasomotor symptom in Japan**

Melissa K. Melby, PhD, CPGS, MPhil, MA

The symptom hiesho (chilliness) seems to be a more important vasomotor symptom than hot flushes and sweats in Japanese women and may reflect differing thermoregulatory physiology, possibly influenced by dietary soy.

### **Women’s midlife health across cultures: DAMES comparative analysis**

Michelle A. Parsons, SM and Carla Makhoul Obermeyer, DSc

This article explores self-reported health of middle-aged women in Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, and the United States using the Decisions At Menopause Comparative Study (DAMES) data. Quantitative and qualitative data illustrate that menopausal symptoms may in many cases be overshadowed by other concerns, such as family and work responsibilities.

### **An application of the theory of life’s lesions to the study of the menopausal transition**

Kaja Finkler, PhD

This article illuminates the experiential, existential and contextual sources influencing menopausal manifestations. The concept of life’s lesions is proposed and suggests that women’s experiences of physiological changes occurring during the menopausal period may be promoted by specific aspects of their lives, described in the paper, that are embedded in society and culture.

### **Environmental contexts of menopause in Spain: comparative results from recent research**

Cristina Bernis, PhD and David Sven Reher, PhD

The process of reproductive aging for women in the region of Madrid, Spain, living in different environmental contexts show significant disparities in age at menopause, in the prevalence and type of the many menopausal symptoms, and in the degree of medicalization of their own change of life. Even when adjusting for basic confounders, the environmental context significantly influences the pace of aging as well as the experience of hot flashes. These disparities are best understood as the result of the interaction among biological, ecological, and behavioral factors influencing women both earlier in life and during the change of life they are experiencing now.

### **Symptoms, menopause status, and country differences: a comparative analysis from DAMES**

Carla Makhoul Obermeyer, DSc, David Reher, PhD, and Matilda Saliba, MSc

Surveys on representative samples of women aged 45-55 in Massachusetts, Spain, Lebanon, and

Morocco, show differences in reported symptom frequencies across sites, but also similarities in core symptoms including hot flashes; the article examines the determinants of these differences and similarities.

**Symptom groupings at midlife: cross-cultural variation and association with job, home, and life change**

Lynnette Leidy Sievert, PhD, Carla Makhlouf Obermeyer, PhD, and Matilda Saliba, MSc

A study of symptom clusters in Morocco, Lebanon, Spain, and the United States demonstrates cross-population variation. Variables that predict symptom groupings (eg, job change, marital status, menopause status, or level of education) also differed in country-specific ways.