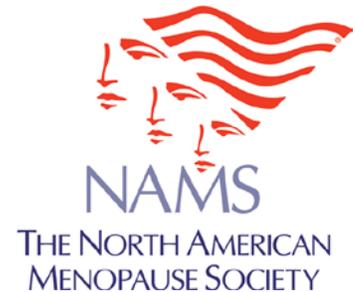


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**New Study Proves Link Between Disrupted Sleep and Heart Disease in Menopausal Women**

*Plaque buildup shown to increase as sleep decreases*

CLEVELAND, Ohio (October 5, 2016)—It's no secret that the menopause transition can be a time of disrupted sleep for many women. However, a new study coming out of the University of Pittsburgh has demonstrated how shorter sleep time and poorer sleep quality can be associated with an increased cardiovascular disease risk. The study will be presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) in Orlando, October 5-8.

More specifically, the study of 256 nonsmoking perimenopausal and postmenopausal women aged 40 to 60 years tested whether sleep time (measured via wrist actigraphy, an objective marker of sleep) and subjective sleep quality were associated with elevated carotid atherosclerosis, the buildup of plaque inside the artery wall that reduces blood flow to major organs such as the heart and brain. None of the study participants had a history of clinical cardiovascular disease, none were taking hormone therapy, and none were taking any medications for sleep.

“We found that shorter objective sleep time was associated with significantly higher odds of carotid plaque,” says Rebecca Thurston, PhD, director of the Women’s Biobehavioral Health Laboratory and Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh. “In addition, poorer subjective sleep quality was associated with significantly higher intima media thickness (thickening of the arterial walls).”

“This study highlights the need for healthcare providers to have meaningful conversations with their menopausal patients about their sleep patterns in order to fully assess their risks for strokes and heart disease,” says Dr. JoAnn Pinkerton, NAMS executive director.

Drs. Thurston 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](http://www.menopause.org).