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Cannabis Use for Menopause Symptom Management

New study documents increased use and interest in cannabis for managing menopause symptoms

CLEVELAND, Ohio (September 28, 2020)—As legislation relaxes regarding cannabis, it is being used to manage numerous chronic health conditions and mood symptoms. A new study indicates that a growing number of women are either using cannabis or want to use it for the management of bothersome menopause symptoms. Study results will be presented during the 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS), which opens on September 28.

In a sample of 232 women (mean age, 55.95 y) in Northern California who participated in the Midlife Women Veterans Health Survey, more than half reported such bothersome symptoms as hot flashes and night sweats (54%), insomnia (27%), and genitourinary symptoms (69%). Roughly 27% of those sampled reported having used or were currently using cannabis to manage their symptoms. An additional 10% of participants expressed an interest in trying cannabis to manage menopause symptoms in the future. In contrast, only 19% reported using a more traditional type of menopause symptom management, such as hormone therapy.

Cannabis for menopause symptom management was most often used in women reporting hot flashes and night sweats. Such use did not differ by age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or mental health conditions.

“These findings suggest that cannabis use to manage menopause symptoms may be relatively common. However, we do not know whether cannabis use is safe or effective for menopause symptom management or whether women are discussing these decisions with their healthcare providers—particularly in the VA, where cannabis is considered an illegal substance under federal guidelines. This information is important for healthcare providers, and more research in this area is needed,” says Carolyn Gibson, PhD, MPH, a psychologist and health services researcher at San Francisco VA Health Care System and the lead author of the study.

The study, “Cannabis use for menopause symptom management among midlife women veterans,” will be one of many presentations during the 2020 NAMS Virtual Annual Meeting focused on novel approaches for treating menopause symptoms.

“This study highlights a somewhat alarming trend and the need for more research relative to the potential risks and benefits of cannabis use for the management of bothersome menopause symptoms,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

Drs. Gibson and Faubion are available for interviews before and after the virtual annual meeting.

For more information on menopause and healthy aging, visit menopause.org.

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.