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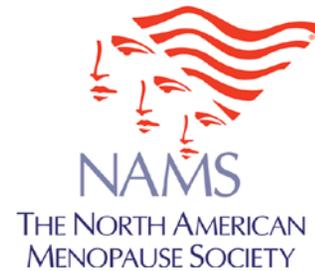
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Prolonged Use of Hormone Therapy May Minimize Muscle Loss Associated With Aging

New large-scale study evaluated duration of hormone therapy to determine effect on muscle mass loss and the prevalence of sarcopenia in postmenopausal women

CLEVELAND, Ohio (February 12, 2020)—Skeletal muscle mass and strength are critical in helping prevent falls, fractures, and disability. Yet, they continue to decline during the menopause transition. A new study showed that the prolonged use (defined as ≥ 13 mo) of hormone therapy (HT) was associated with higher muscle mass and less chance of sarcopenia. Study results are published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

Sarcopenia is defined as a loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength that mostly affects older people. In addition to increasing the risk of falls and fractures, it can also increase the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Although sarcopenia is highly prevalent in postmenopausal women, there is no definitive evidence supporting its link with the decline in estrogen during the menopause transition. Multiple small-scale studies have been conducted to assess the association between HT use and muscle mass, but their results have been inconsistent.

This new study, which included more than 4,200 postmenopausal women, is one of the few large-scale studies known to assess the link between use of HT and muscle loss in postmenopausal women. More specifically, it focused on the duration of HT use and its effect on muscle mass and the prevalence of sarcopenia.

On the basis of study results, which appear in the article “The association between hormone therapy and sarcopenia in postmenopausal women: the Korea National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2008-2011,” the researchers concluded that prolonged use of HT is associated with higher muscle mass and a lower prevalence of sarcopenia in postmenopausal women.

“Although not all studies examining an association between hormone therapy and muscle mass have shown positive results, this large cross-sectional study demonstrated a relationship between extended use of hormone therapy and both greater muscle mass and lower risk of sarcopenia in women aged younger than 65 years and with a body mass index less than 25 kg/m²,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director. “The mechanism by which estrogen protects muscle mass remains unclear, and additional study is needed.”

For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit 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.