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Poor Sleep Quality and Fatigue Plague Women With Premature Ovarian Insufficiency

Study compares quality of sleep and fatigue in women with premature ovarian insufficiency receiving hormone therapy with women of the same age with preserved ovarian function

CLEVELAND, Ohio (July 15, 2019)—Sleep disturbances are a frequent complaint of women in the menopause transition and postmenopause. A new study demonstrates that women with premature ovarian insufficiency (POI) who are receiving hormone therapy have poorer sleep quality and greater fatigue than women of the same age with preserved ovarian function. Study results are published online in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS).

It is estimated that 40% to 50% of menopausal and postmenopausal women complain about sleep problems. Sleep problems include difficulty falling asleep and/or staying asleep, as well as waking up too early. Complicating matters is the fact that women with insomnia generally complain more about body pain, headaches, daytime dysfunction, mood disorders, fatigue, and decreased work productivity. Although some of the problems are related to other common symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, not all sleep issues can be traced back to these root causes.

Although numerous studies have been conducted about the sleep patterns of menopausal and postmenopausal women in general, this newest study from Brazil is thought to be the first to specifically evaluate the sleep quality in women with POI. This condition differs from premature menopause because women with POI can still have irregular or occasional periods for years and might even become pregnant. The Brazilian study found that women with POI who are receiving hormone therapy have poorer sleep quality, largely as a result of taking longer to fall asleep. These women were also found to have a higher fatigue index and were more likely to use sleep-inducing medications compared with comparably aged women who still had full ovarian function.

Study results appear in the article “Sleep quality and fatigue in women with premature ovarian insufficiency receiving hormone therapy: a comparative study.”

“This study shows that women with POI have poor sleep quality despite the use of hormone therapy. Another interesting finding from the study is that total sleep quality in women with POI was directly related to the number of children they had and overall was similar to sleep quality in women without POI. This speaks to the scope of the problem when it comes to sleep disturbances and the important and often under-recognized factors that contribute to sleep complaints being more common in women than in men,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

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.