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**More Discussion Needed About Vulvovaginal Health at Well Woman Visits**

*New study found that only about one-third of postmenopausal women are comfortable discussing vaginal issues at well woman visits; even fewer clinicians are initiating conversations*

CLEVELAND, Ohio (September 24, 2019)—Despite the wealth of information now available about menopause, women are still not comfortable in proactively discussing vaginal issues related to menopause with their healthcare providers, who appear equally uncomfortable and unlikely to initiate the conversation. That’s according to a new study which will be presented during The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) Annual Meeting in Chicago, September 25-28, 2019.

In this new study involving more than 1,500 postmenopausal women, 45% reported some type of postmenopausal vulvovaginal symptom, such as vaginal dryness, itching, soreness, or odor. Of these symptomatic women, only 39% discussed their symptoms at their well woman visits. When conversations about vulvovaginal health did take place, researchers discovered that it was the patient who more often initiated the discussion than the clinician (59% vs. 22%), with 16% reporting that both started the discussions.

Of the women who entered into a conversation with their healthcare providers, 83% were satisfied or very satisfied with the results of the discussions as they led to helpful recommendations. Of the women who didn’t have a conversation, 18% wished they had.

“Nearly half of these postmenopausal women reported having a vulvovaginal problem, yet a minority discussed their symptoms at a well woman visit,” says Dr. Amanda Clark, lead author of the study and an affiliate investigator with the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research in Portland, Oregon. “Since the discussions that did occur led to helpful interventions, this suggests a role for greater clinician-initiated screening for genitourinary syndrome of menopause.”

“With so many options now available, such as over-the-counter lubricants and moisturizers as well as low dose vaginal hormonal products containing estrogen or DHEA, there is no reason for women to continue to suffer in silence,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director. “Hopefully studies like this one will open the door to better patient-provider communication at well woman visits.”

Drs. Clark and Faubion are available for interviews before the presentation at the Annual Meeting.

For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit [menopause.org](http://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](http://www.menopause.org).