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The Menopause Society™
Leading the Conversation

Higher Body Mass Index Associated with Worse Symptoms During Perimenopause

New study using data from the Flo app is among the first to examine the association between obesity and symptom burden during the period leading up to menopause.

CLEVELAND, Ohio (Nov. 25, 2026) – A lot is known about how a woman's body mass index (BMI) can affect her menopause symptoms. Much less is known, however, about how excess adiposity may amplify the severity of perimenopause symptoms. A new study suggests that obesity can cause similar amplification effects during perimenopause, especially with regard to somatic symptoms. Results of the study are published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The Menopause Society.

Over the past decade, the menopause market has transformed from a largely overlooked and unspoken niche into a rapidly expanding commercial and clinical category. Increased education, a resurging interest in and acceptance of hormone therapy, and the introduction of an array of proven therapeutics are driving increased financial investments and media interest in menopause. More recently, there has been a growing awareness of and interest in what happens during perimenopause, the natural transition leading to the final menstrual period.

A recent study reflects that growing interest. In the study involving nearly 2,000 perimenopausal women whose data was gathered through the Flo app, researchers sought to evaluate the association between BMI and overall perimenopause symptom burden. Higher BMI, which is linked to aging, is already known to be associated with a greater burden of menopause symptoms in postmenopausal women. However, little research has focused on studying this relationship during perimenopause, when hormone fluctuations, emerging metabolic changes, and early shifts in body composition may interact with BMI to influence symptom presence and severity.

In the study, multivariable regression models adjusting for age, race and ethnicity, income, education level, smoking, physical activity, alcohol use, and comorbidities (anxiety, depression and diabetes), showed that higher BMI was independently associated with more severe symptoms, especially somatic symptoms, including hot flashes and night sweats. Comorbid anxiety and depression emerged as the strongest independent predictors of symptom burden, regardless of the BMI category, followed by insufficient income, lower educational attainment, and smoking, whereas more frequent physical activity was associated with lower symptom burden.

Given the high prevalence of obesity, understanding the impact of BMI on perimenopause symptoms is important. Identifying modifiable factors that influence symptom burden may inform targeted interventions to reduce symptoms and improve health outcomes, as well as overall quality of life in midlife women.

Study results are published in the article “Association between body mass index and perimenopause symptom burden: a cross-sectional global study using the Flo App.”

“In this large global study, higher BMI was associated with greater overall symptom burden, particularly physical symptoms, but weight was only part of the picture. Mental health, smoking, physical activity, and socioeconomic factors were also associated with symptom severity. These findings reinforce the need to take a comprehensive, individualized approach to women in perimenopause, while recognizing that we need longitudinal studies to determine whether modifying these factors actually improves symptoms,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society and one of the study authors.

For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit www.menopause.org.

The Menopause Society is dedicated to empowering healthcare professionals and providing them with the tools and resources to improve the health of women during the menopause transition and beyond. As the leading authority on menopause since 1989, the nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization serves as the independent, evidence-based resource for healthcare professionals, researchers, the media, and the public and leads the conversation about improving women’s health and healthcare experiences. To learn more, visit menopause.org.