



The
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Severe Menopause Symptoms May Take Toll on Brain Health

New study explores effect of various menopause symptoms, such as hot flashes, on memory, attention, language, and executive function

CLEVELAND, Ohio (August 14, 2024)—With more than 24 million people globally living with dementia without a cure in sight, there is a lot of focus on ways to prevent and delay cognitive impairment. A new study suggests that severe menopause symptoms such as hot flashes and depression can negatively affect cognitive function in postmenopausal women. Results of the study are published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The Menopause Society.

In conjunction with our aging population, dementia diagnoses are on the rise. It is estimated that 4.6 million new cases are diagnosed every year, which translates into one person being diagnosed with dementia every 7 seconds. That means dementia cases are expected to double every 20 years, reaching 81.1 million by 2040.

The good news is that medical experts estimate that 40% of cases of Alzheimer disease, the most common form of dementia, can be prevented or, at minimum, delayed. Because of this fact, there is a lot of interest in identifying risk factors. Recent research has focused on the importance of estradiol in female cognitive aging. Because the menopause transition is characterized by a decline in estrogen, postmenopausal women are at an increased risk of dementia.

A new study involving nearly 1,300 late-postmenopausal women from nine Latin American countries suggests that severe menopause symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep, and mood disturbances were linked with cognitive impairment. Whether effectively treating hot flashes with hormone therapy or other approved therapies can help improve cognition in the form of memory, attention, language, and executive function, is unknown.

Based on these results, the researchers concluded that there is intricate interplay between hormonal, lifestyle, and sociodemographic factors involved with cognitive health.

Study results are published in the article “Severe menopausal symptoms linked to cognitive impairment: an exploratory study.”

“This study showed a potential link between severe menopause symptoms and cognitive impairment in midlife women. The results also suggest a protective effect of lower body mass index, higher educational level, physical exercise, hormone therapy use, and sexual activity on cognition, highlighting the potential for targeted interventions to protect and preserve cognitive function in menopausal women,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society.

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

The Menopause Society (formerly The North American 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.