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The  
**Menopause  
Society™**

*Leading the Conversation*

**Contact:**

The Menopause Society

Ella Adams (eadams@fallsandco.com)

Phone: (216) 696-0229

**Intimate Partner Violence Shown to Take Toll on Women's Cognitive Performance**

*New study based on SWAN data suggests working memory performance declined faster among women with a history of physical intimate partner violence*

CLEVELAND, Ohio (Sept 10, 2024) – As we age, it is likely harder to repeat a phone number we just heard. Memory impairment is considered a normal part of aging. However, due to various risk factors, some people experience greater decline. A new study suggests that physical intimate partner violence may accelerate working memory performance decline. Results of the study will be presented at the 2024 Annual Meeting of The Menopause Society in Chicago September 10-14.

An alarming one-third of women in their lifetimes will be affected by some type of intimate partner violence which can result in short- and long-term health consequences. These include poorer performance on measures of cognitive function. Intimate partner violence is physical, emotional, or sexual harm caused by a current or former intimate partner.

In a new study using data from more than 1,700 women who participated in the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN), researchers sought to determine whether experiencing physical intimate partner violence in pre- or early-perimenopause was associated with steeper declines in subsequent tests of cognitive performance. Analyses were adjusted for race/ethnicity, education, financial strain, depressive symptoms, trouble sleeping, and bodily pain.

The findings suggested that women who reported physical intimate partner violence in the year prior to the SWAN baseline interview subsequently demonstrated a statistically significantly greater decline in working memory performance over time compared to women who had not reported violence. These findings support those of prior studies which found that physical intimate partner violence was negatively associated with working memory.

“This analysis underscores the importance of further research into intimate partner violence, which may be an under-recognized source of unfavorable cognitive aging,” says Jillian Baker, lead researcher from the University of Michigan.

More detailed results will be discussed at the 2024 Annual Meeting of The Menopause Society as part of the presentation entitled “Experiences of physical intimate partner violence and longitudinal cognitive performance in midlife women: findings from the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation (SWAN).”

“It's important for healthcare providers to understand the association between physical violence and mental health,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society. “The high incidence of intimate partner violence should further prompt healthcare professionals to open the conversation about this sensitive issue with their patients.”

Jillian Baker and Dr. Faubion are available for interviews prior to the Annual meeting.

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