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The  
**Menopause  
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*Leading the Conversation*

**Does an Early Menopause Transition Cause Women to Leave the Workforce Sooner?**

*New study concludes that an earlier menopause transition is associated with poorer perceived work ability and predicts lower recorded work participation and a higher disability pension rate in subsequent years*

CLEVELAND, Ohio (March 13, 2024)—Since most women will continue working for years after entering menopause, the effect of menopause symptoms on their working ability is an important issue and the focus of a new study. Among other things, the study suggested that premature menopause can limit a woman’s work ability and time spent in the workforce. Results of the survey are published online in *Menopause*, the journal of The Menopause Society.

Early menopause is the term used when women undergo menopause early—before the age of 45 years. Approximately 5% to 10% of all women fit into this category. At this point, it is assumed that women have almost 20 years of their working life remaining. However, the menopause transition causes roughly 80% of women to suffer from such bothersome symptoms as hot flashes and night sweats, which can adversely affect a woman’s quality of life.

Menopause (estrogen deficiency) can take a toll on women’s health in other ways as well, including an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis, unfavorable changes in body composition, and musculoskeletal pain. To date, however, few studies have analyzed whether menopause symptoms may be negatively associated with work ability and well-being at work.

A previous UK study showed that menopause before 45 years of age was associated with a nine-percentage-point reduction in labor market participation once these women entered their 50s compared with women who did not experience early menopause.

In this latest study that involved nearly 2,700 Finnish women, researchers investigated how women’s menopause status at 46 years of age was associated with their perceived work ability and registered working life participation during subsequent years. It concluded that an early menopause transition is challenging in that it affects women’s work ability and limits their working life participation.

Based on these results, the researchers recommend that healthcare professionals effectively treat menopause symptoms and promote the overall health of women experiencing early onset menopause so that they continue to be productive in the workforce. Further, they suggest that employers consider making working conditions more flexible for women undergoing the menopause transition to help them manage their symptoms to limit the risk of them prematurely ending their careers.

Survey results are published in the article “Climacteric status at age 46 is associated with poorer work ability, lower 2-year participation in working life, and a higher 7-year disability retirement rate: a Northern Finland Birth Cohort 1966 study.”

“This study showed that entering the menopause transition early is linked with poorer work ability and impaired long-term working life participation. These findings reinforce the importance of addressing bothersome menopause symptoms to optimize a woman’s quality of life, both personally and professionally,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society.

For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit [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).