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Telehealth Proves Effective in Treating Some Symptoms of Menopause, But Not All

New NAMS video explores how telehealth is helping to extend care to underserved menopausal women

CLEVELAND, Ohio (July 19, 2022)—The explosion of interest in women’s health has led to rapid growth in the relatively new FemTech industry. This trend, which coincided with the onset of the COVID19 pandemic, has accelerated the adoption of telehealth for the treatment of menopause symptoms. A new video from The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) summarizes how telehealth is allowing more women to seek symptom relief, although the need for physical examination remains.

The video, *Benefits and Pitfalls of Virtual Medicine in Midlife Women’s Health*, (<https://www.menopause.org/for-professionals/video-series-2022>) is hosted by NAMS past-president Dr. Marla Shapiro and features expert insights from Dr. Lisa Larkin, who is based in Cincinnati, Ohio, and a member of the NAMS Board of Trustees.

FemTech, a term first coined in 2016, refers to the collective products and services that use technology to focus on women’s health. Like telehealth, the FemTech industry was furthered by the COVID19 pandemic, which prompted patients to seek technologies and products that would free their need to physically visit a healthcare professional and potentially be exposed to the COVID virus. These services have proven especially attractive to younger patients who have more interest in the use of technology.

“Telehealth is a great way to extend care,” says Dr. Larkin. “Among other things, it allows us to reach women in menopause in underserved areas where there is a paucity of certified menopause specialists. That’s not to say, however, that all telehealth services are the same and that they can completely replace a face-to-face visit.”

According to Dr. Larkin, a telehealth visit with a healthcare professional with whom a patient has an existing relationship is a great way to augment care because that professional already has the patient’s health history and data to make an informed diagnosis and recommend appropriate treatment. But she cautions that telemedicine care on its own with a professional who has no history can result in misdiagnoses.

Dr. Larkin further points out that, because telemedicine grew so quickly and unexpectedly, there has not been time for standards and guidelines to sufficiently catch up.

“Women need to realize that not everything can be adequately addressed during a virtual visit, and evidence-based care is still critical,” says Dr. Larkin. “Although menopause is ideally suited for telemedicine because women can easily communicate their symptoms and concerns, there are times when a physical examination is still necessary. Vaginal dryness, for example, can have multiple causes, and menopausal women shouldn’t automatically assume that menopause is the only reason. Only a physical examination can rule out other more serious causes.”

“Telehealth may be a great way for women experiencing symptoms of menopause to obtain care, but patients should be savvy consumers and ensure that they are receiving high-quality, evidence-based information and care from professionals who have expertise in managing menopause. Patients can identify a practitioner certified by The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) at menopause.org,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

The new video is part of NAMS’ comprehensive video series for women on important midlife health topics. For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit www.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.