

Obesity risks increase after menopause

October 25 2007

Postmenopausal women are at an age when the incidence and exacerbation of the chronic health conditions associated with obesity become more prevalent. A new article published in *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing* reviews the physiological, psychological and social issues related to obesity that are relevant to postmenopausal women. The article underlies the importance of nurses and other healthcare professionals for intervention.

Obesity can lead to an increased risk of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea, cancer, osteoarthritis and mental health problems, all of which can be significantly reduced by weight loss. Heart disease in particular, although often considered a “man’s disease,” is the number one killer of women, taking more than forty times the number of lives than breast cancer every year, despite being preventable.

Nearly two-thirds of American women are either clinically “overweight” or “obese.” As women are more at risk for being overweight or obese than men, and women are at risk for gaining weight as they age, postmenopausal women are a particularly vulnerable population. It is important for health care providers to understand the health consequences of obesity and incorporate these into health promotion strategies for postmenopausal women.

“Postmenopausal women stand at a crossroad, facing the possibility of living the remainder of their lives in essentially good health or facing the probable onset of chronic diseases that might have been prevented,” says author Karen E. Dennis. “By first understanding the health consequences

of being overweight, nurses have a unique opportunity to work with women of all ages in fighting obesity.”

Source: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Citation: Obesity risks increase after menopause (2007, October 25) retrieved 2 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-10-obesity-menopause.html>

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