

Hot flashes take toll on life, health, and work

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Hot flashes put a damper on women's health and productivity at work and pump up the cost of health care. A study published online this month in *Menopause*, the journal of the North American Menopause Society (NAMS), has put some numbers on their impact.

The survey of more than 3,000 women age 40 to 75 selected from the 2010 US National Health and Wellness Survey showed that, for women with severe symptoms, lost [work productivity](#) cost \$6,560, compared with \$1,079 for women with mild symptoms. The cost of [doctor visits](#) for [hot flashes](#) was also much higher for women with severe symptoms—\$962 compared with \$574 for those with mild symptoms and \$257 for those without symptoms. What's more, women with more severe symptoms felt much less healthy than those with milder symptoms, even if they had the same [body mass index](#) and number of other illnesses.

As many as 40% of women may experience hot flashes for more than 7 years and as many as 15% for more than 15 years. And in this study, the average age of women with severe hot flashes was 59, older than 51, the average age of menopause. That means many women may need help for their hot flashes for longer than most studies judge hormone therapy to be safe to use. In addition, some women may not be able or may not want to take hormones but still need their doctor's help with severe hot flashes.

"This study underscores the burden that severe hot flashes put on women and our society. It also emphasizes the need for more safe options to

control symptoms," said Margery Gass, Executive Director of NAMS. "New, safe, nonhormonal prescription options could be a great boon to the many women who have a need for hot flash therapy."

The article, "Impact of the severity of [vasomotor symptoms](#) on health status, resource use, and productivity," conducted by Kantar Health and sponsored by [Pfizer Inc](#), will be published in the May 2013 print edition of *Menopause*.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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