

Age at first menstrual cycle, menopause tied to heart disease risk

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–Chinese women are less likely to develop cardiovascular disease if they have their first menstrual cycle or enter menopause later than their peers, according to a recent study accepted for publication in The Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (JCEM)*.

The study also found earlier onset of [menopause](#) was associated with a higher risk of developing osteoporosis. The risk was significantly lower for [women](#) who were older than 50 when they underwent menopause. The findings could be used to identify women who are more likely to face heart disease or osteoporosis.

"Determining who is at risk for these conditions may aid health care professionals in preventing and detecting cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis," said the study's lead author, Gang Chen, M.D., Ph.D., of Fujian Medical University in China.

Women who were 18 or older when they had their first menstrual cycle had a lower risk of developing [cardiovascular disease](#), according to the analysis. Previous studies have found that earlier onset of the first [menstrual cycle](#) (menarche) is associated with increased body mass index and waist circumference, which may partly explain the findings.

Although the links between cardiovascular health and age at the onset of menarche and menopause have been researched in western countries, this study was among the first to examine whether the same associations exist in an Asian population. The cross-sectional population study

evaluated 3,304 post-menopausal women in southeastern China's Fujian Province.

"Our study examined the age at menarche and menopause of [Chinese women](#) to see what we could learn about their disease risk," Chen said. "The findings provide valuable insights about who is at risk and will benefit future efforts to improve heart and bone health."

More information: The article, "Associations between Age at Menarche and Menopause with Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes and Osteoporosis in Chinese Women," appears in the April 2013 issue of JCEM.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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