

Age at menopause, hormone therapy linked to BCC risk

November 3 2015



Late age at natural menopause and menopausal hormone therapy use are associated with increased risk of basal cell carcinoma, according to a study published online Nov. 2 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

(HealthDay)—Late age at natural menopause and menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) use are associated with increased risk of basal cell carcinoma (BCC), according to a study published online Nov. 2 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

Elizabeth K. Cahoon, Ph.D., from the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md., and colleagues used data from the U.S. Radiologic Technologists Study to examine the correlations between reproductive factors, exogenous estrogen use, and first primary BCC. They accounted for sun exposure, personal sun sensitivity, and lifestyle factors for geographically dispersed women with a range of ambient ultraviolet radiation exposure.

The researchers found that the risk of BCC was elevated with late age at natural menopause (hazard ratio for ≥ 55 years versus 50 to 54 years, 1.5) and with any use of MHT (hazard ratio, 1.16). Women reporting natural menopause who used MHT for 10 or more years had the most increased risk compared with those who never used MHT (hazard ratio, 1.97). There was no correlation for BCC risk with age at menarche, parity, age at first birth, infertility, use of diethylstilbestrol by participant's mother, age at hysterectomy, or oral contraceptive use.

"Novel findings of increased BCC risk associated with MHT in women experiencing natural menopause and for late age at natural menopause warrant further investigation," the authors write. "Users of MHT may constitute an additional high-risk group in need of more frequent skin cancer screening."

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Citation: Age at menopause, hormone therapy linked to BCC risk (2015, November 3) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-11-age-menopause-hormone-therapy-linked.html>

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