

Is there a connection between your age at menopause and later depression?

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A review of medical literature suggests older age at menopause was associated with a lower risk of depression for women in later life. Eleni Th Petridou, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D., of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, and coauthors included 14 studies in a meta-analysis that represented nearly 68,000 women.

Study results suggest [menopause](#) at age 40 or older compared with [premature menopause](#) was associated with a decreased risk for depression (four studies; 3,033 unique participants). Older age at menopause and a longer reproductive period mean a longer exposure to endogenous estrogens.

"This meta-analysis suggests a potentially protective effect of increasing duration of exposure to endogenous estrogens as assessed by age at menopause as well as by the duration of the reproductive period. ... If confirmed in prospective and culturally diverse studies controlling for potential confounders and assessing depression via psychiatric evaluation, these findings could have a significant clinical effect by allowing for the identification of a group of women at higher risk for depression who may benefit from psychiatric monitoring or estrogen-based therapies," the authors conclude.

To read the full article and a related editorial by Hadine Joffe, M.D., M.Sc., of Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, and Joyce T. Bromberger, Ph.D., of the University of Pittsburgh, please visit the For The Media website.

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