

# Sedentary lifestyle spells more menopause misery

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Sedentary middle-aged Hispanic women in Latin America have significantly worse menopause symptoms than their active counterparts, shows a study of more than 6,000 women across Latin America, which was published online today in *Menopause*, the journal of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS). The analysis also linked sedentary lifestyle with depression, anxiety, insomnia, and obesity.

The study analyzed data from the Collaborative Group for Research of the Climacteric in Latin America surveys and health records of 6,079 women, ages 40 to 59, who attended one of 20 urban health centers in 11 Latin American countries. The women completed standard questionnaires about depression, anxiety, insomnia, and menopause symptoms. Symptoms on the Menopause Rating Scale (MRS) questionnaire include [somatic symptoms](#), such as hot flashes and joint pains, psychological symptoms such as [depressed mood](#) and anxiety, and urogenital symptoms such as sexual problems, [vaginal dryness](#), and bladder problems. The women also answered other questions, such as what their activity level and menopause status were.

Women were considered to be sedentary if they reported fewer than 3 weekly sessions of physical activity, such as walking, jogging, or swimming, that lasted 30 minutes or longer, and menopause symptoms were considered severe if the MRS score was 16 or more.

A [sedentary lifestyle](#) was very common, reported by 64% of the women. And the following statistically significant contrasts between the

sedentary women and active women stood out: Some 16% of the sedentary women had severe menopause symptoms compared with 11% of the active women. The sedentary women also had higher total menopause scores, and more of them had any of the individual symptoms than the active women did. The sedentary women were also more likely to be obese and to have higher scores on the depression, anxiety, and insomnia scales.

Results of studies of the ability of exercise to reduce [menopause symptoms](#) have been conflicting, but this study adds some weight to the exercise side of the equation.

Less menopause misery is just one of the positive impacts of being active for [women](#) at midlife, emphasizes NAMS Executive Director JoAnn V. Pinkerton, MD, NCMP.

"Regular physical activity reduces the risk of breast and colon cancer, dementia, heart attacks, stroke, depression; loss of lean muscle mass, and bone loss and improves immune system function. One study showed that just one hour of walking daily cut the risk of obesity by 24%. Fewer hot flashes, fewer health risks, increased well-being—who doesn't want these benefits?"

**More information:** The article, "Sedentary lifestyle in middle-aged women is associated with severe menopausal symptoms and obesity," will be published in the May 2016 print edition of *Menopause*.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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