

Does hormonal contraception alleviate premenstrual symptoms?

November 28 2016



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The results of a new study designed to compare the severity and timing of perimenstrual symptoms among women who do or do not use cyclic hormonal contraception are reported in *Journal of Women's Health*.

The article entitled "The Influence of Cyclic Hormonal Contraception on Expression of Premenstrual Syndrome" is coauthored by *Journal of Women's Health* Editor-in-Chief Susan Kornstein, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, Kimberly Yonkers, MD and Margaret Altemus, MD, Yale University School of Medicine, and Brianna Cameron and Ralitza Gueorguieva, PhD, Yale University School of Public Health, New Haven, CT.

The researchers report changes in menstrual cycle symptom scores for variables such as depression, anger, irritability, and physical symptoms between cyclic [hormonal contraception](#) users and nonusers. They found that cyclic hormonal contraception may attenuate [premenstrual symptoms](#), but that the timing of symptoms is similar regardless of whether the subjects used hormonal contraception. Better understanding the psychological and physical effects of hormonal contraception could help guide clinicians in the diagnosis and treatment of [premenstrual syndrome](#) (PMS).

"Because women taking hormonal contraceptives are routinely excluded from studies of PMS and [premenstrual dysphoric disorder](#) (PMDD), this study provides a valuable examination of the influence of exogenous hormones on premenstrual symptom expression and response to treatment," says Robert Downs, MD, Deputy Editor of *Journal of Women's Health*, Richmond, VA.

More information: Kimberly A. Yonkers et al, The Influence of Cyclic Hormonal Contraception on Expression of Premenstrual Syndrome, *Journal of Women's Health* (2016). [DOI:](#)

[10.1089/jwh.2016.5941](https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2016.5941)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

Citation: Does hormonal contraception alleviate premenstrual symptoms? (2016, November 28)
retrieved 19 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-11-hormonal-contraception-alleviate-premenstrual-symptoms.html>

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