

Physical activity contributes to positive mental well-being in menopausal women

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Credit: University of Jyväskylä

A recent study has found that late menopausal status is associated with an elevated level of depressive symptoms that indicate the negative dimension of mental well-being. However, menopause was not linked to positive dimensions of mental well-being in women aged 47 to 55. The results also suggest that a high level of physical activity was linked to fewer depressive symptoms, higher satisfaction with life and higher positive affectivity in menopausal women.

"According to our research, [postmenopausal women](#) had more

depressive symptoms than peri- or premenopausal women," says doctoral student Dmitriy Bondarev from the Gerontology Research Center and Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. "At the same time menopause was not related to positive mental well-being."

The menopausal transition is divided into three stages. Pre-menopause begins five to ten years before menopause with gradual irregularity in menstrual cycles. Perimenopause is the time prior to last menstruation, when the function of the ovaries noticeably fades away. Postmenopause is the time after the last menstruation.

Menopause occurs on average between the ages of 46 and 52 and signifies the aging of a woman's reproductive system, which has a far-reaching effect on many bodily functions. However, the link between menopause and psychological functioning in middle-aged women has been investigated less.

The findings of the study indicate that irrespective of the menopausal status, [physical activity](#) was beneficial for mental well-being in middle-aged women.

"Physically active women had lower [depressive symptoms](#), had higher positive affectivity scores and were more satisfied with life in comparison to inactive women," Bondarev explains. "Thus, being physically active during the menopausal transition may help to withstand the negative influence of [menopause](#) on depressive symptomatology and spare positive mental well-being."

The study is a part of the Estrogenic Regulation of Muscle Apoptosis (ERMA) study involving over 1,000 women aged 47 to 55 living in Jyväskylä, Finland. In the present study, the menopausal stage was determined by the serum hormone concentrations and menstrual diaries.

Mental well-being and physical activity were self-reported by the participants.

More information: Dmitriy Bondarev et al, The role of physical activity in the link between menopausal status and mental well-being, *Menopause* (2020). [DOI: 10.1097/GME.0000000000001490](https://doi.org/10.1097/GME.0000000000001490)

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