

Can a history of migraines lead to more severe hot flashes for postmenopausal women?

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Migraines affect more women than men. Hormones appear to be a key reason why. Fluctuating hormone levels can also cause hot flashes. A

new study links a history of migraines and hot flashes and highlights the fact that both could be associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Study results will be presented during The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, September 22-25, 2021.

Migraine has a strong female predominance affecting roughly 20% of women. Hormones are believed to play a significant role in triggering migraine, helping explain why women experience more migrainerelated symptoms compared to men. Migraines are also associated with cardiovascular events and mortality in women much the same way that vasomotor symptoms ([hot flashes](#)) appear to be a biomarker of heart [disease](#).

A prior study investigated the association between migraines and hot flashes and found that a history of migraines predicted an increased frequency of hot flashes in women during the menopause transition. This new study coming out of the Mayo Clinic continues that research and further examines a potential link between a history of migraines and hot flashes, as well as their possible association with an increased risk of heart disease.

This new study involved more than 3,300 women, 27% of whom reported a history of migraine. Study participants were, on average, 52.8 years old, predominantly white (94.5%), educated with at least some college (93%), partnered (84.9%), and postmenopausal (66.6%). After adjusted analysis, the study found that women with a history of migraines had significantly worse menopause symptoms and were more likely to have severe or very severe hot flashes versus no hot flashes when compared to women with no migraine history. In addition, the study found that, while women with [low back pain](#) also had worse menopause symptoms, in general, they were no more likely to have experienced severe/very severe hot flashes, thus confirming the

specificity of the link between hot flashes and migraines.

"We believe that neurovascular dysregulation may explain the link between migraines and hot flashes, as well as the association of each with [cardiovascular disease](#) in women," says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director and lead author for the study. "Given the high prevalence of migraine in women, this association may help identify women who are at risk for more severe hot flashes in midlife. Further study is needed to determine whether the combination of [migraine](#) history and hot flashes in midlife predict greater heart disease risk than either alone and whether these female-specific factors could be used to enhance the accuracy of CVD risk calculations for [women](#)."

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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