

Study suggests obese women have worse menopause symptoms and get less relief from hormone therapy

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Obesity has already been associated with a number of adverse health conditions and can interfere with a person's quality of life. A new study,

presented at the [2023 Annual Meeting of The Menopause Society](#) in Philadelphia, September 27–30, suggests that in addition to these other problems, it may also worsen a woman's menopause symptoms and limit the amount of relief she gets from hormone therapy (HT).

HT remains the most effective treatment to manage a wide array of [menopause](#) symptoms. Little research has been done, however, on the impact of comorbidities on the efficacy of HT during menopause. More specifically, no research is known to exist relative to the effect of obesity on the effectiveness of HT.

A new five-year study involving 119 patients sought to fill some of that information void by investigating the association of obesity and self-reported efficacy of HT in peri- and [postmenopausal women](#). In this study obesity was defined as a body mass index of greater than or equal to 30.

There were no statistically significant differences between the two groups of patients (obese vs. non-obese) relative to age, duration of menopause, or use/acceptance of HT. Women with obesity, however, were more likely to self-identify as Black, report the presence of hot flashes, genitourinary/vulvovaginal symptoms, mood disturbances, and decreased libido.

Based on the results, the researchers concluded that [menopausal women](#) with [obesity](#) experienced an increase in menopause symptom prevalence and lower efficacy of HT. Dr. Anita Pershad from Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk led the study.

"We studied [menopausal symptoms](#) in an underrepresented patient population that's not often included in women's health studies. This research can help clinicians serving a more diverse racial and socioeconomic patient population that's severely affected by the social

determinants of health to provide better tailored care and counseling to patients seeking treatment for their menopausal symptoms," says Dr. Pershad.

"This is important for health care professionals to consider when counseling their patients on the various options for managing their menopause symptoms," adds Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society. "Considering that more than 40% of women over the age of 40 are classified as obese according to the CDC, these results could be meaningful to a large percentage of patients transitioning through menopause."

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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