

Premature menopause linked to increased musculoskeletal pain and likelihood of sarcopenia

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Musculoskeletal pain is a prevalent menopause symptom, which helps explain why women typically experience more pain than men, especially

around the age of 50 years. Beyond pain, muscle function and mass are also affected by menopause.

A new study suggests premature surgical [menopause](#) can lead to an increased risk of muscle disorders. Results of the survey are published online in an article titled "Association of muscle disorders in late postmenopausal women according to the type of experienced menopause" in *Menopause*.

The Study of Women's Health Across the Nation spotlighted a number of symptoms that are common during the menopause transition. Among other findings, it confirmed that muscle stiffness complaints were most prevalent during menopause, affecting 54% of US women aged 40 to 55 years.

This is also the time when ovarian hormone levels decrease significantly. In women who have experienced premature menopause, either spontaneous or surgical, the decrease is even more prominent. In addition, [testosterone levels](#) have also been shown to fall significantly in women with premature menopause.

These facts led researchers to conduct a new study specifically designed to evaluate the effect of different types of menopause on muscle discomfort and function in late-postmenopausal women aged 55 years and older. The study, which included nearly 650 women, concluded that women experiencing premature surgical menopause were more likely to develop musculoskeletal discomfort and sarcopenia than those with natural menopause at age 45 years or older. They theorized that the pain and decline in [muscle mass](#) in the late-postmenopause stage was more closely linked to [hormone deficiency](#) than to chronologic age alone.

"This study highlights the potential long-term musculoskeletal effects of premature surgical menopause, which causes a more abrupt and

complete loss of ovarian hormones, including estrogen and testosterone, than natural menopause. The use of hormone therapy until the natural age of menopause has the potential to mitigate some of the adverse long-term effects of early estrogen loss," says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, medical director for The Menopause Society.

More information: Association of muscle disorders in late postmenopausal women according to the type of experienced menopause, *Menopause* (2024). [DOI: 10.1097/GME.00000000000002367](https://doi.org/10.1097/GME.00000000000002367)

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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