

Nationwide Poll Reveals Menopause Poses Challenge For Female Executives

(NAPSA)—Menopause is a natural stage of life in a woman's aging process when the ovaries stop producing estrogens. The process can occur naturally or may be induced by surgery, chemotherapy or radiation. Since estrogens are largely responsible for developing and maintaining the female reproductive system, reduced levels can cause such symptoms as night sweats and hot flashes, vaginal dryness and mood swings. These symptoms can significantly interfere with daily sleep, productivity at work and home, relationships and social activities.

Results from a nationwide Harris Interactive survey, conducted among members of the National Association for Female Executives (NAFE), found that survey participants over the age of 35 with menopausal symptoms also experienced difficult sleeping or insomnia, an unexpected symptom that makes it even harder to cope with "the change." Women reported that insomnia was the symptom of menopause that bothered them the most, with 72 percent of participants experiencing it frequently (at least once per week) and 59 percent losing on average three or more hours of sleep each night.

"Insomnia is very common among women who are experiencing vasomotor symptoms of menopause. The majority of the women I treat are juggling work, family and household responsibilities and can't afford to lose sleep, which can make them feel unproductive during the day," said James A. Simon, M.D., CCD, Clinical Professor, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. "It's

Did You Know?

According to a nationwide Harris Poll:

- 80 percent of women with menopausal symptoms said that one or more of their symptoms, such as hot flashes, night sweats or insomnia, were problematic in their daily lives.
- 44 percent of respondents with insomnia said that symptoms affected their ability to perform as well at work.
- Data show that low-dose estrogen plant-based therapy is a safe and effective option for women with symptoms.



important for women experiencing problematic hot flashes and night sweats to discuss their treatment goals with a health care provider to determine what their options may include."

Thirty-one percent of the women surveyed said menopausal symptoms are problematic to their romantic lives and 28 percent said that they are problematic to their overall emotional well-being.

"Executive and professional women excel at finding solutions, whether at work, at home or their personal lives," said Betty Spence, Ph.D., NAFE president. "When it comes to health care, women need accurate information, which is not always readily available. NAFE conducted this survey of menopausal symptoms to foster an open discussion of a topic long considered taboo, and to encourage women to talk with their doctors and find solutions that work for them."

The survey found that 88 percent of women with insomnia associated with menopause report experiencing more fatigue

during the day, 62 percent say they are more irritable and 44 percent say they cannot do their job as well.

"Even compared to one year ago, we now have a lot more knowledge about the benefits and risks associated with hormone therapy," added Dr. Simon. "The data show that short-term use of estrogen therapy is a safe and effective option for women with disruptive symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats."

Dr. Simon's viewpoint is echoed by several professional organizations, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and North American Menopause Society (NAMS), which recommend hormone therapy for the treatment of menopausal symptoms at the lowest doses for the shortest duration.

"I was going through 'menopause misery'—sleep disturbances, hot flashes, mood swings—which affected all facets of my life. The symptoms were particularly distressing at work, especially since I am often the only woman in the room," said Susan Brown, a Washington, D.C.-based lawyer, NAFE member and mother of three. "My doctor and I decided on a treatment regimen that helped me get back on track. I didn't let menopausal symptoms slow me down."

If you are experiencing such symptoms as day and night sweats, you should discuss them with your physician. There may be new treatment options to help alleviate your symptoms. As with all prescription drugs, you should always consult a physician before beginning any treatment plan.