Speak Up for Menopause Care

Hormones can improve quality of life in menopause, but women aging with HIV aren't getting the support they need.

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Hormones can improve quality of life in menopause, but women aging with HIV aren't getting the support they need, according to a study published in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes.

Elizabeth King, MD, of the University of British Columbia, and colleagues evaluated access to and discussions with health care providers about menopausal hormone therapy among Canadian women living with HIV. Of the 464 women who were perimenopausal or postmenopausal, nearly half (48%) reported symptoms like moderate to severe hot flashes that could qualify them for hormone replacement therapy. But just 12% had ever taken hormone therapy to manage their symptoms, and only 6% were currently using it.

This is despite the fact that 45% had broached the topic of menopause with a health care provider. But that's just the average. Only 37% of Indigenous women and 36% of Black women had ever discussed menopause with a provider. When it came to actually using menopausal hormone therapy, Black women were 58% less likely to do so than their white peers.

All of this "hints at a gap in care for midlife women living with HIV," the researchers wrote. These findings "underscore the need for provider education and menopause management within HIV care."

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