Depression, Quality of Life, Work Productivity, Resource Use, and Costs Among Women Experiencing Menopause and Hot Flashes: A Cross-Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine the effect of depression on health-related quality of life, work productivity, resource use, and costs among women experiencing menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes.

Method: The study included data from the 2005 US National Health and Wellness Survey (N = 41,184), a cross-sectional, Internet-based survey representative of the adult US population. Among women who reported experiencing menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes, women who reported experiencing depression in the last year (n = 1,165) were compared with women who did not report experiencing depression in the last year (n = 2,467), controlling for demographic and health characteristics. Outcome measures included health-related quality of life (Medical Outcomes Study 8-item Short-Form Health Survey [SF-8]), work productivity within the past 7 days, self-reported health care resource use within the past 6 months, and indirect and direct costs.

Results: Women experiencing depression were significantly more likely to be white, to be unemployed, to be uninsured, to currently smoke, to not exercise, and to be obese (all $P < .05$). After controlling for these differences, women experiencing depression reported significantly lower mental (39.66 vs 50.85, $P < .05$) and physical (44.05 vs 46.38, $P < .05$) SF-8 component summary scores. Similarly, the prevalences of time missed from work (5.31% vs 2.80%, $P < .05$), impairment while at work (25.00% vs 14.32%, $P < .05$), and impairment of daily activities (37.32% vs 23.16%, $P < .05$) due to health were greater among women experiencing depression. The numbers of physician visits (2.47 vs 1.77, $P < .05$), emergency room visits (0.27 vs 0.16, $P < .05$), and days hospitalized (0.36 vs 0.18, $P < .05$) in the past 6 months were also higher among women experiencing depression. Per woman per year indirect and direct costs were $3,066 and $1,075 higher, respectively, for women experiencing depression compared with those not experiencing depression.
Conclusion: Approximately one-third of women experiencing menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes, also reported experiencing depression. These women reported significantly worse quality of life and significantly greater work productivity loss, health care resource use, and costs. Given the prevalence and burden, these findings suggest that proper assessment and management of depressive symptoms among women with menopause may have an important humanistic and economic benefit.

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