



THE VOICE OF MIDLIFE AND OLDER WOMEN

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**SURVEY SHOWS MANY YOUNGER WOMEN GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION THAN MENOPAUSE**

OWL Calls for Education Campaign to Demystify Menopause

WASHINGTON DC, September 14, 2011 – A new OWL survey of women showed women of all ages need more information about menopause, and that younger women, in particular, often lack even basic information about this major life stage:

- Nearly 70 percent of younger women (age 30-44), many of whom could shortly experience initial symptoms, say they don't have enough information about menopause;
- Two-thirds of younger women say they do not know most signs and symptoms of menopause;
- Nearly a quarter of younger women – 24 percent – say they have more information about symptoms and treatments for erectile dysfunction (ED) than menopause.

Additionally, the survey results showed that younger women aren't aware of some of the most serious and life-altering symptoms of menopause. Only 16 percent of women age 30-44 cited painful intercourse as a symptom of menopause, and only half of women in this age group thought vaginal dryness was a serious symptom. Younger women also showed substantially less understanding that weight gain and insomnia are common menopausal symptoms. In contrast, in women ages 55-60, about 50 percent recognized insomnia and painful intercourse as symptoms of menopause; three-quarters understood vaginal dryness to be a symptom; 58 percent reported weight gain as a symptom.

"Many younger women have more information about ED than menopause," said Bobbie Brinegar, Executive Director at OWL. "We need to demystify menopause."

Strong majorities of women of all ages – over 90 percent of those surveyed – voiced support for a publicly available, Web-based menopause education program that includes information about how to manage and treat menopausal symptoms.

“Our survey shows a clear need to educate women about this important juncture in life earlier so they know what to expect and can plan for how they would like to deal with menopause’s symptoms,” said Margaret Huyck, Ph.D., President of OWL. “Getting reliable information earlier will mean better health and higher quality of life outcomes for women in the future.”

After seeing these survey findings, OWL hopes that these results will build support for a national evidence-based menopause education campaign.

Other Survey Highlights

- *Most women are more comfortable discussing menopause and its symptoms with their doctors than they are with their partners, families, and friends.*
 - 60 percent of women are most comfortable discussing menopause and its symptoms with their primary health care providers;
 - Only about 13 percent will speak with close friends or family members about the life stage;
 - Less than half of women surveyed are comfortable discussing sexual problems they may experience during menopause with their partners.
- *There are significant differences among different racial and ethnic groups with regards to how menopause is viewed as impacting sex life.*
 - 54 percent of Hispanic women say menopause negatively impacts their sex life, while 42 percent of white women and 26 percent of African American women think their sex lives are negatively affected.
- *Women both lack information about and are concerned about their treatment options.*
 - Over 60 percent of women ages 30-44 and 45-54 say they don’t know enough to make informed decisions on treatment options;
 - Over 80 percent of women worry about possible long-term consequences of their treatments.
- *Support for public education is strongest among women who report no conversations with a primary health care provider about menopause and those who are satisfied with the conversations they have had with health care providers.*
 - 80 percent of respondents felt it is important for the federal government to establish a Web site, similar to information Web sites like www.vaccines.gov and www.flu.gov, which could help increase awareness and understanding of menopause and treatment options among women of all ages.

About the Survey and Methodology

OWL commissioned Global Strategy Group (GSG) to conduct an online survey of women ages 30 to 60. GSG surveyed 1048 women between August 23 and August 29, 2011. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.0%. The margin of error at the subgroup level is greater.

About OWL

Founded in 1980, OWL – The Voice of Midlife and Older Women– is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that advocates in the areas of health, economic security, and quality of life for the 74 million American women who are midlife and older. For more information, visit <http://www.owl-national.org/Welcome.html>.

About Global Strategy Group

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