

Poster Session Stress and depressed mood increase the risk of night sweats, but not hot flashes, in menopausal women

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Hot flashes (HF) and night sweats (NS) are the most bothersome and most studied symptoms during the menopausal transition. They are associated with a decline in quality of life, sleep and mood disturbances. Typically, HF and NS are combined and studied as a single variable, referred to as vasomotor symptoms (VMS). However, our participants describe HF and NS as different experiences. HF are shorter in duration and generally have less sweat, while NS are longer, more sweaty, and more likely accompanied by chills. We utilized a dataset of 188 western Massachusetts women aged 45-55 years to explore whether the same or different variables were associated with HF and NS. Participants were interviewed about demographics and reproductive history. The Perceived Stress Scale and Patient Health Questionnaire (for depressed mood) were self-administered. Separate binary logistic regressions were performed in SPSS with presence/absence of HF and NS as outcome variables, and stress and depressed mood as independent variables. Models were adjusted for financial comfort, menopausal status, and trouble sleeping. The risk of NS increased with higher levels of depressed mood (OR 1.13, 95% CI 1.03-1.25) and stress (OR 1.05, 95%CI 1.00-1.11). Models with HF were not significant. Our findings suggest that different variables are associated with NS compared to HF, therefore researchers should consider examining NS and HF as separate symptoms. Paying more attention to how HF and NS are different from each other can help us gain a more nuanced understanding of menopausal symptoms that better reflects women's experiences.