Hormone Combo Eased Vasomotor Symptoms

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WASHINGTON — Postmenopausal women who took a low-dose estrogen/progestin medication reported significant improvements in vasomotor symptoms and quality of life after 6 months, according to findings from an open-label efficacy study.

The therapy caused a significant increase in triglycerides, from an average of 129 mg/dL at baseline to an average of 168 mg/dL after 6 months. But the women had no other significant changes in their lipid profiles or in their body weight, body mass index, or blood glucose during the study period, Dr. Fernando Ayala Aguilera of the Hospital Universitario, Monterrey (Mexico), and colleagues reported in a poster presentation at the annual meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine.

In the study, sponsored by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, 68 postmenopausal women aged 45-55 years who reported at least four hot flashes a day received a combination of 1 mg 17β-estradiol and 0.125 mg trimegestone orally each day for 6 months. Women without an intact uterus, with known or suspected breast cancer, or with abnormal bleeding were excluded.

Patient scores on the MENQOL (a questionnaire designed to evaluate the quality of life symptoms in menopausal women) dropped from an average of 78 at baseline to an average of 5 after 6 months of treatment. Scores on the Blatt-Kupperman menopausal index dropped from an average of 40 at baseline to an average of 8 after 6 months. The average total cholesterol was stable between baseline and 6 months. Blood glucose, body weight, and body mass index were essentially also unchanged.

The preliminary results suggest the combination may provide enough relief from menopausal symptoms to outweigh the potential risks of increased triglycerides in the absence of other adverse effects on lipid profiles. ■