Cervical Polyps Called Less Risky Post Menopause

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NASHVILLE, TENN. — Cervical polyps in postmenopausal women might pose lower risk of malignancy, dysplasia, and atypia than those found in premenopausal women, according to a study presented at the annual meeting of the North American Menopause Society.

Dr. Peter F. Schnatz of the University of Connecticut, Farmington, and his colleagues searched a pathology database for cases of endocervical polyp excision recorded over a 5-year period. A total of 1,993 polyps were found. Mean patient age was 48 years (range 16-95 years), and most came from private ob.gyn. practices.

For women younger than 50 years, the investigators found an incidence for malignancy, dysplasia, and atypia of 0.18%, 0.70%, and 2.1%, respectively. For women at least 50 years old, the incidence rates were 0.12%, 0.24%, and 1.2%. Although the differences between the two age groups for each individual prevalence did not reach statistical significance, the overall difference in the prevalence of any of the three abnormalities (3% for younger women vs. 1.5% in the older group) did reach significance ($P = .03$). There were two malignancies reported, with one in each age group.

Dr. Schnatz said that the findings of low prevalence of abnormalities for cervical polyps should reassure patients. Moreover, "routine removal is reasonable, given the high likelihood of symptoms, the small possibility of malignancy or transformation to malignancy, and the potential marker for uterine or extrauterine disease, as well as the ease of removal," he said.

He noted that polyps are the most common benign neoplastic growth in the cervix; are found in roughly 5% of women, most commonly in multiparous women older than 20 years; and are rare before menarche. ■