

The MIRROW Survey: Women's Perspectives on Aging and Menopause and Symptom Treatment

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Introduction

- The menopausal transition is physiologically characterized as a decline in estrogen levels among middle-aged women, which can often lead to a number of physical and emotional symptoms
- Surveys of women across different cultures show that
 - Women believe menopause to be a natural part of aging and/or had a positive attitude toward menopause¹⁻⁵
 - Older women have reported a more positive attitude toward menopause than younger women^{1-3,6}
 - Hot flashes and vaginal atrophy are commonly reported symptoms of menopause, but few women seek treatment or discuss these symptoms with their healthcare provider⁷⁻¹¹
- Women's perspectives on aging and menopause, in midlife, warrant further research

Aim

To assess women's attitudes on aging and menopause, determine how they manage their menopausal symptoms, and evaluate different trends by age

Methods

- Data were pulled from a nationally representative, online sample of 5001 women, ages 35-80, surveyed in April 2018 (sponsored by TherapeuticsMD, Boca Raton, FL)
- In this study, women aged 35-44 years of age who were experiencing ≥ 1 symptom of aging/menopause were eligible
- The national representative sample was balanced to the general population demographics with regard to ethnicity, income, region, age
- Survey questions focused on aging and menopause experience and management of symptoms
- Results were analyzed by age group when available: 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and ≥ 65 years

Results

Survey response and demographics

- Of the 8561 surveys sent to eligible women, 5001 women responded (58%)
- Respondents were primarily white (77%), married/cohabitating with a spouse/partner for a mean of 25 years (63%), and postmenopausal (49%; **Table 1**)
 - Women were relatively equally distributed among the age groups
- Most women reported being in perimenopause at age 40-49 years, and in menopause at age 50-55 and older

Attitudes toward menopause and aging

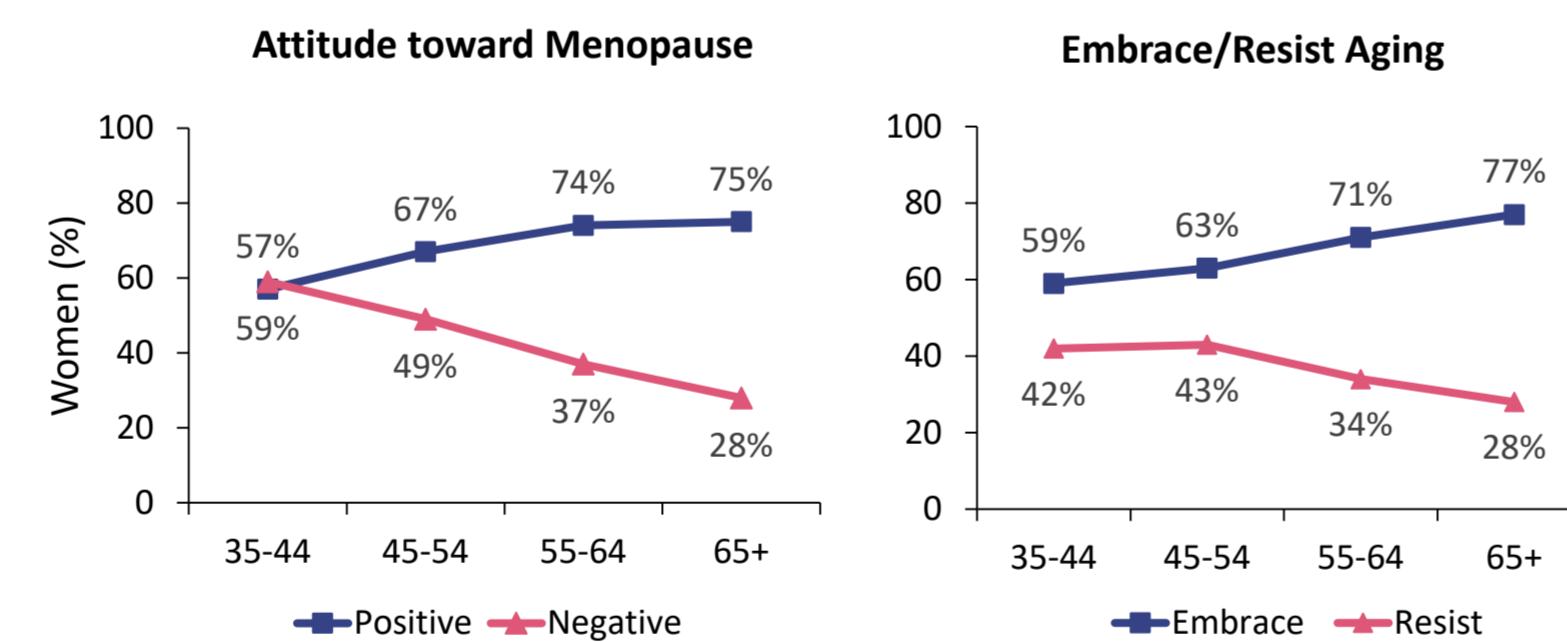
- Almost one-third of all women (62%) and more than half in each age group (51%-73%) viewed menopause as a natural part of life
- Fewer (22%) younger women (35-44 years) believed it would be easy to manage and work through menopause and aging changes compared with older women ≥ 65 years (50%)
- More younger women (35-44) had negative attitudes toward menopause and aging than older (≥ 65) women (**Figure 1**), and younger women were more likely to believe that aging had an impact on their sex life (42% vs 21%), spouse/partner (40% vs 20%), dating/relationships (37% vs 11%), and family/friends (31% vs 18%)

Table 1. Survey responders' demographics and disposition

Characteristics	Survey Responders (N=5001)
Age (y), %	
35-44	21
45-54	27
55-64	28
≥ 65	25
Race, %	
White	77
Hispanic	12
African-American	11
Living Arrangement, %	
Married/Cohabiting	63
Not married/Living alone	37
Menopausal status, %	
Not yet experiencing menopause	15
Perimenopause	15
Menopause	10
Postmenopause	49
Unsure	9
Currently receiving medication for health condition, %	
35-44	53
45-54	62
55-64	67
≥ 65	79
Ever any HT, %	20

HT, hormone therapy; y, years.

Figure 1. Proportion of women with positive or negative attitude toward menopause and those who embrace or resist the idea of aging



- Overall, 59% of women reported a positive reaction from their spouse/partner to their age-associated changes; however, 25% of these women felt their spouse/partner was unaware of what was truly happening. Conversely, 21% felt their spouse/partner had a negative reaction, with more younger women (35-44 years; 29%) reporting negative reactions vs older women (≥ 65 years; 13%).

Symptoms of menopause and aging

- Women reported currently experiencing a wide range of age-associated symptoms, most commonly gray hair (83%), wrinkles (59%), weight gain (53%), anxiety/depression/mood swings (53%), fatigue (48%), and insomnia (44%)
- Some age-related and menopausal symptoms appeared to vary by age (**Figure 2**)
 - Hot flashes/night sweat incidence was highest in women 45-54 years and declined somewhat in those 55-64 years
 - Vaginal dryness and discomfort/pain during sex was consistent across all age groups, except for those ≥ 65 years
 - More women < 55 years experienced anxiety/depression/mood swings than women ≥ 55 years

- Women believed menopause or hormones were the primary cause of hot flashes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, pain during sex, low libido, increase or decrease in period heaviness/frequency, irritability/mood swings, facial hair growth, and sleep disturbance/insomnia (**Figure 3**)
- Among all aging and menopausal symptoms identified, women claimed that weight gain (37%), fatigue (27%), and insomnia (18%) impacted their lives the most

Figure 2. Proportion of women experiencing select symptoms by age

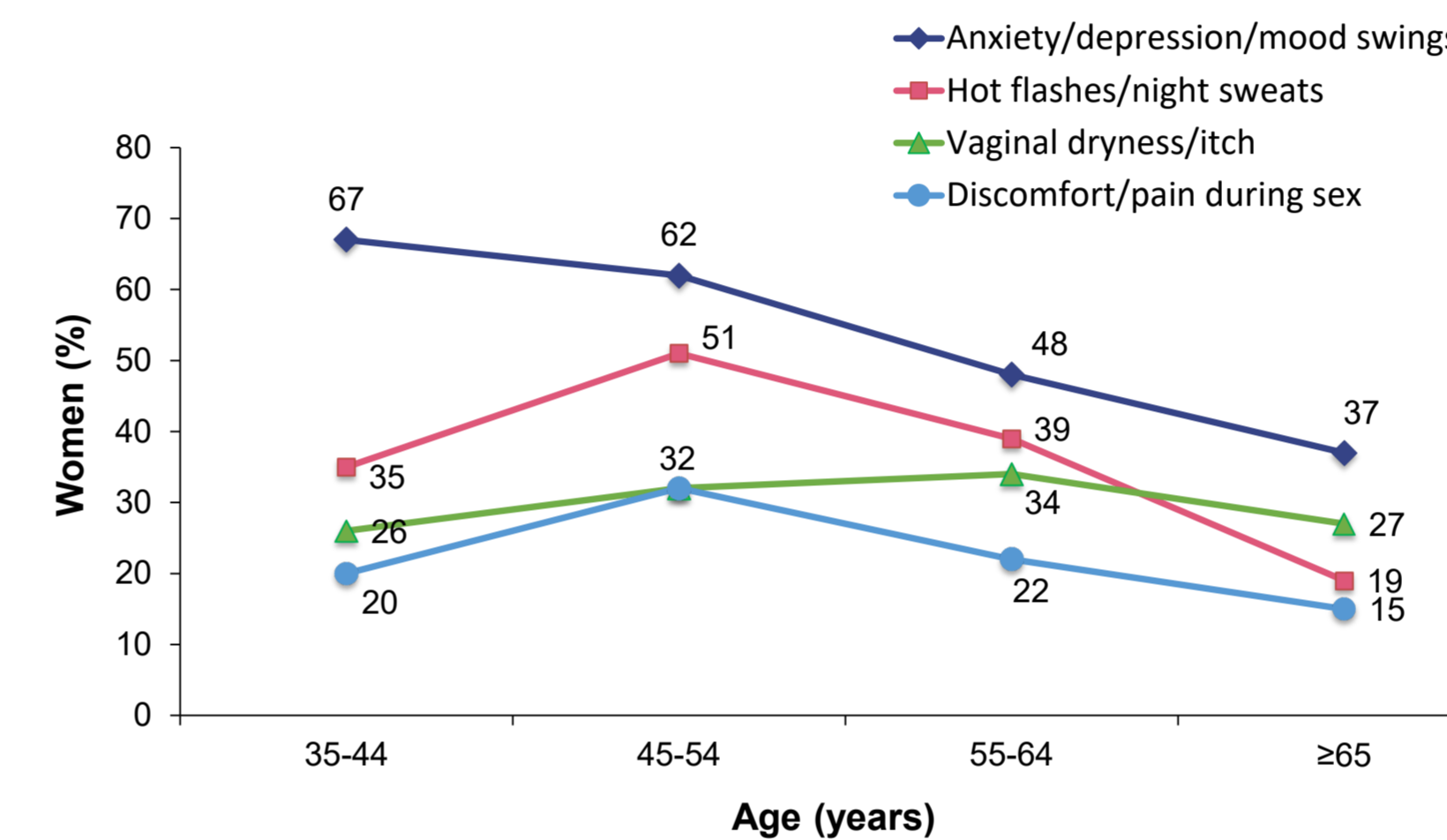
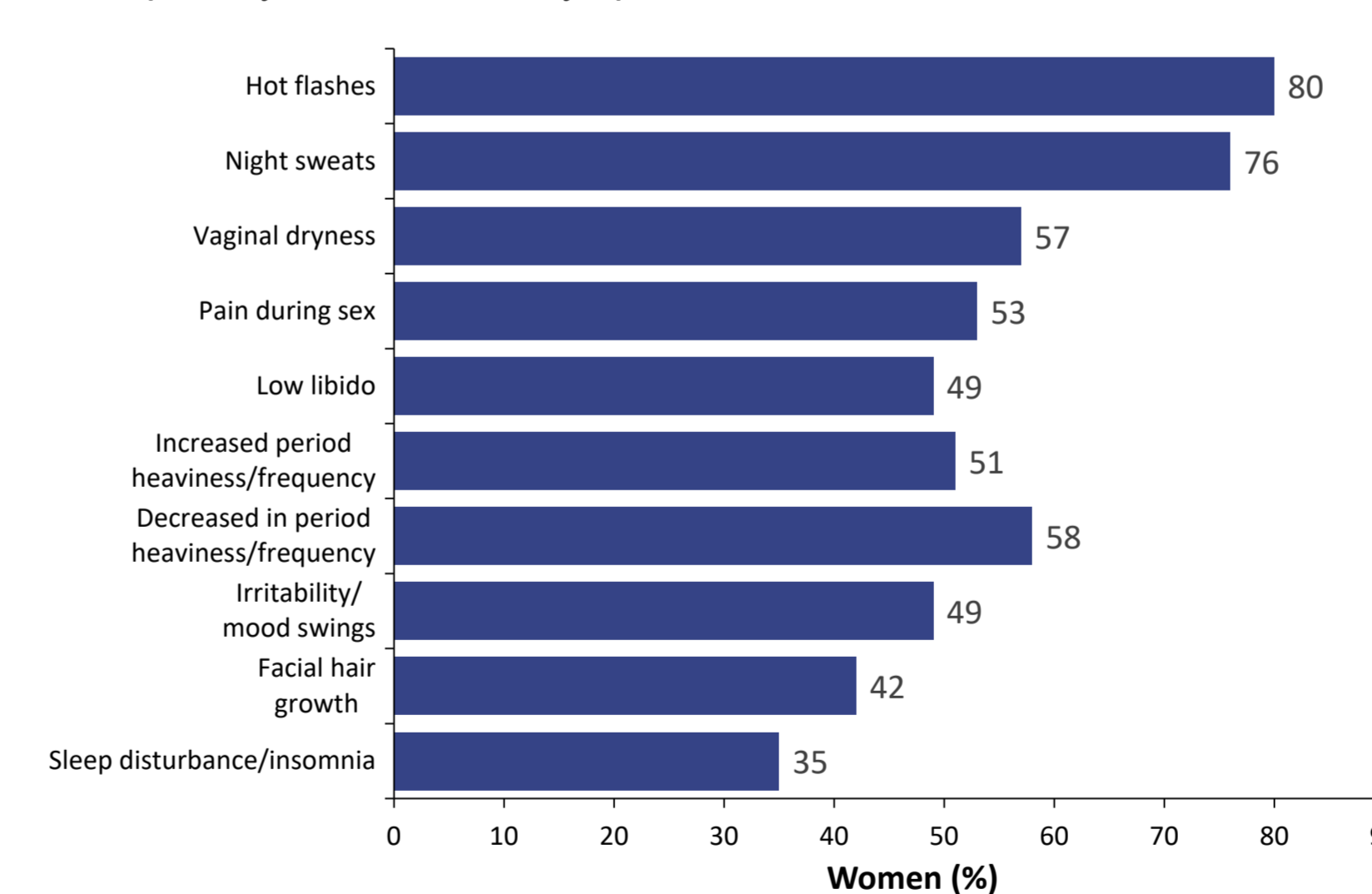


Figure 3. Proportion of women who believed menopause or hormones were the primary cause of their symptoms



- About one third of all women with vasomotor or vaginal symptoms had taken action to manage their symptoms; of those, a third had ever received hormone therapy. Notably, women with vaginal symptoms were about twice as likely to use over-the-counter treatments versus hormone therapy (**Figure 4**).
- Most of the women (74%) actively sought to understand the changes their bodies were undergoing with aging and menopause. However, while two thirds of women experienced vasomotor or sexual symptoms, only one third had discussed them with their healthcare providers (HCPs) (**Figure 5**).
- Women were more likely to discuss weight, insomnia, and fatigue with their HCPs, but less likely to discuss decreased libido

Figure 4. Proportion of women who had ever taken actions, and of those, who took hormone therapy, herbal remedies, or over-the-counter treatments

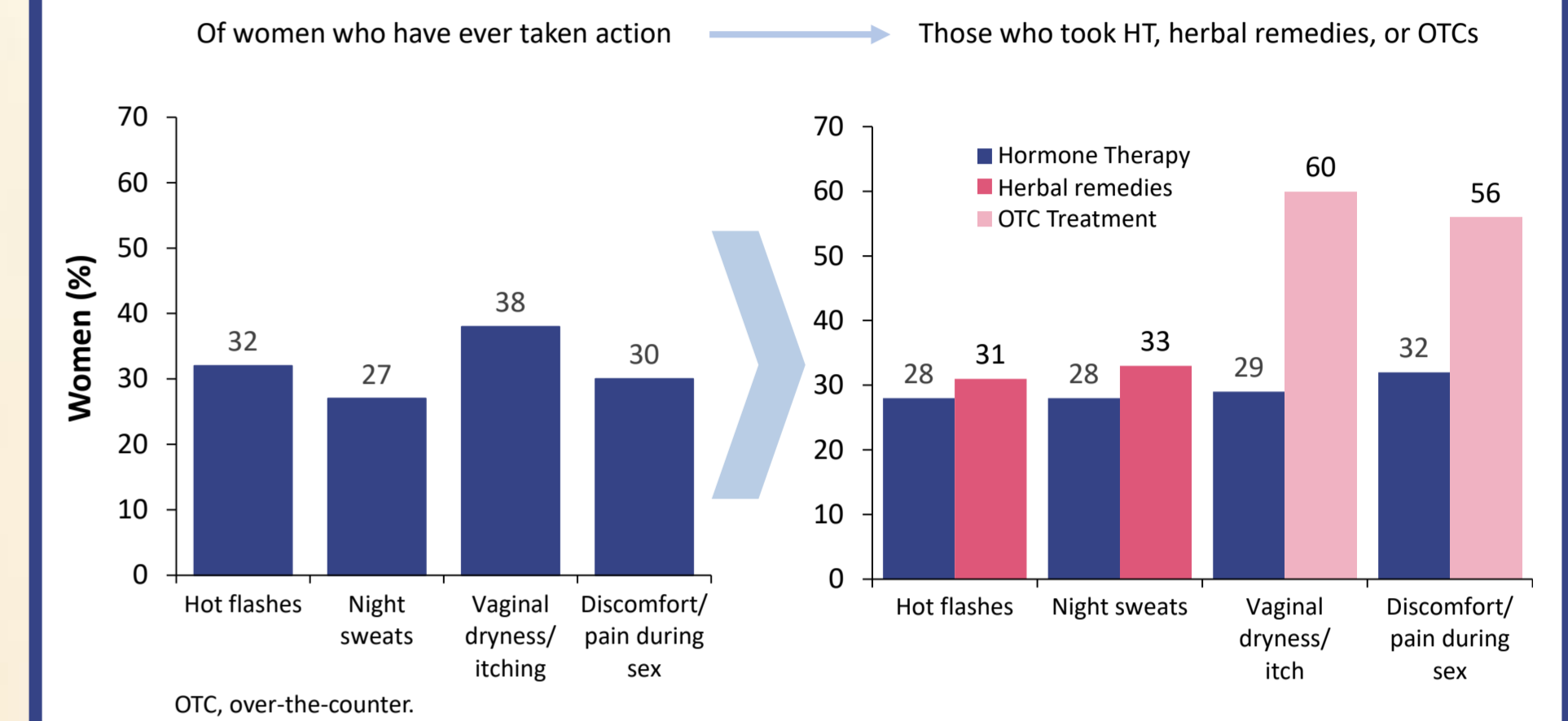
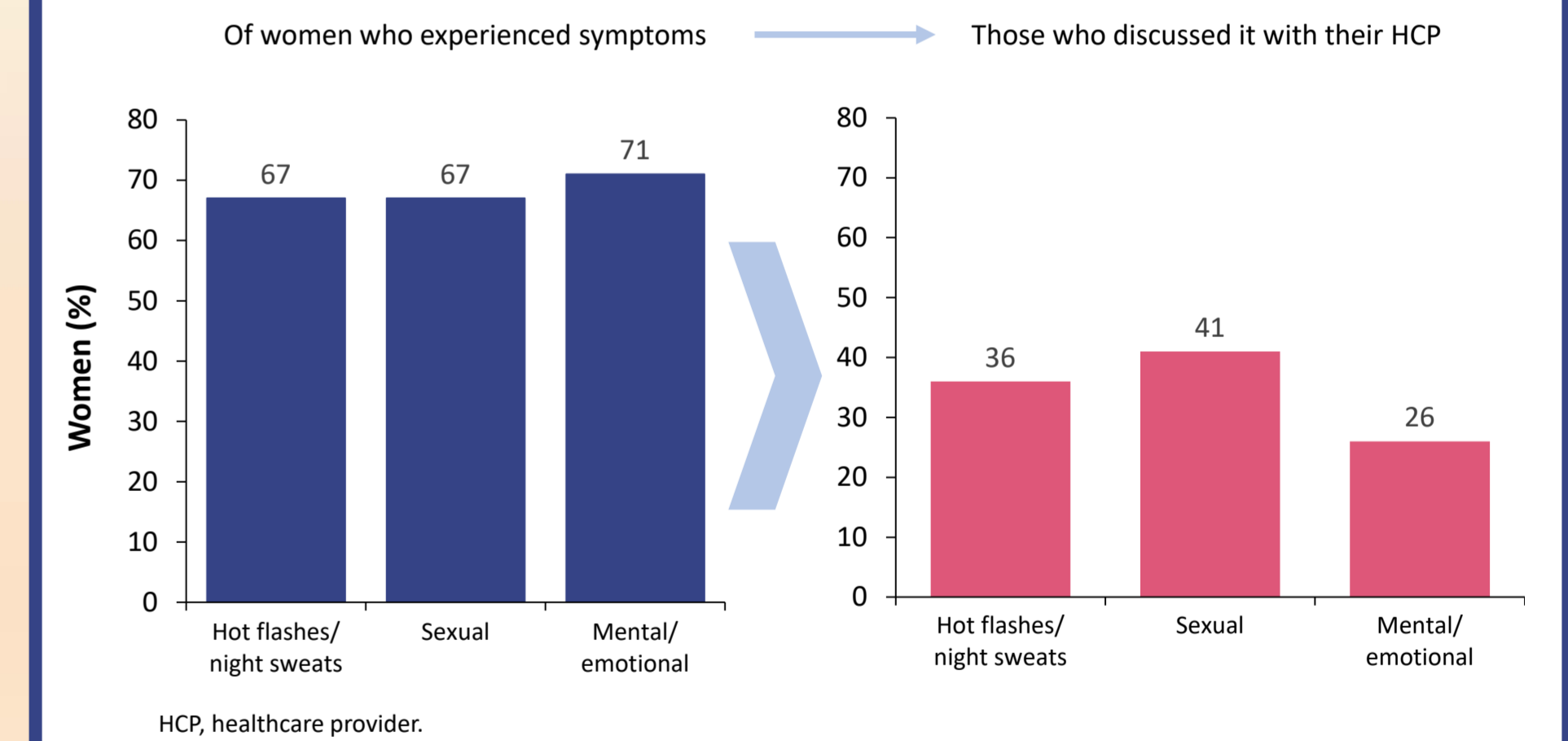


Figure 5. Proportion of women who had experienced symptoms, and of those, who discussed the symptoms with a healthcare provider



Conclusions

- For younger women, anticipation of aging appears to be more distressing than the actual experience. As women age, they tend to be more positive about aging and menopause.
- The types of symptoms of aging/menopause differ by age group
- While women are experiencing symptoms related to aging and menopause, very few treat their symptoms or discuss them with their HCPs

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Disclosures

- Dr. Kingsberg is a consultant for, on the advisory board of, or clinical investigator for AMAG, Dare, Duchesnay, Emotional Brain, Endocutics, GTX, IVIX, Lupin, Materna, Palatin Technologies, Pfizer, Sermonix, Strategic Scientific Solutions, TherapeuticsMD, and Valeant. Dr. Faubion consults for and/or is on the advisory board of AMAG, Mithra, and Proctor & Gamble. Dr. Larkin consults for and/or is on the advisory board of Palatin Technologies, Proctor & Gamble, TherapeuticsMD, and Valeant. Drs. Graham, Bernick, and Mirkin are employees of TherapeuticsMD with stock/stock options. Dr. Bernick is also a board member of TherapeuticsMD.
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