



# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Evidence from randomized trials published in 2002 demonstrated adverse effects of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) on cardiovascular health and an increase in the risk of other diseases.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommended against the routine use of combined estrogen and progestin, one form of HRT, for the prevention of chronic conditions in postmenopausal women. The USPSTF concluded that the harmful effects of combined estrogen and progestin are likely to exceed the chronic disease prevention benefits in most women.<sup>1</sup> Since the USPSTF recommendation there has been an overall decrease in the use of HRT in the United States<sup>2</sup> and in California.<sup>3</sup>

The California Women's Health Survey (CWHS) questions were intended to obtain information specific to the timing of

menopause, as well as updated information on the use of HRT in California. In 2007, the CWHS asked women ages 18 and older about the status of their menstrual cycle. Women who reported not having regular periods were asked when they either stopped having periods or when their periods became irregular. Women were also asked if they were currently using HRT. The following data analyses were conducted on women ages 18-55 years and results were weighted by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population.

## Timing of Menopause

- About 76.8 percent of women reported still having regular periods when asked about menopause; 9.4 percent reported their periods had stopped because of medical/surgical reasons, 6.3 percent cited their periods were irregular because of menopause, and

## Timing of Menopause and Use of Hormone Replacement Therapy Among California Women, 2007

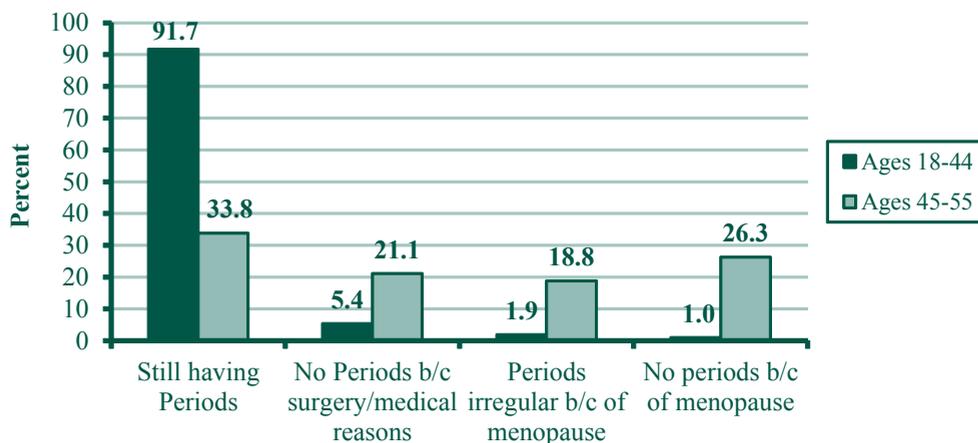
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### Public Health Message:

*Women who entered menopause naturally used HRT less. The average age at which periods stopped because of surgical/medical reasons occurred earlier for women than natural menopause. Women who reported surgical/medical reasons also reported more HRT use. Therefore, these women could potentially take HRT longer, which could increase the health risks related to HRT.*

Figure 1

### Timing of Menopause for Women Ages 18-55, 2007



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2007

## *Timing of Menopause and Use of Hormone Replacement Therapy Among California Women, 2007*

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7.5 percent reported that their periods had stopped because of menopause.

- The average age of women when their periods stopped due to medical/surgical reasons was 38. However, the average age of women when their periods became irregular because of menopause was 46.

### **Timing of Menopause and Demographics**

- White women reported lower rates of being in menopause than other women. However, data was unreliable due to small sample size for African American/Black women.
- Women ages 18-44 reported significantly lower rates of being in menopause (1.0 percent) than women ages 45-55 (26.3 percent;  $p < .0001$ ) (see Figure 1).
- More women in menopause had insurance (14.9 percent) than did not (9.3 percent;  $p < .0001$ ).

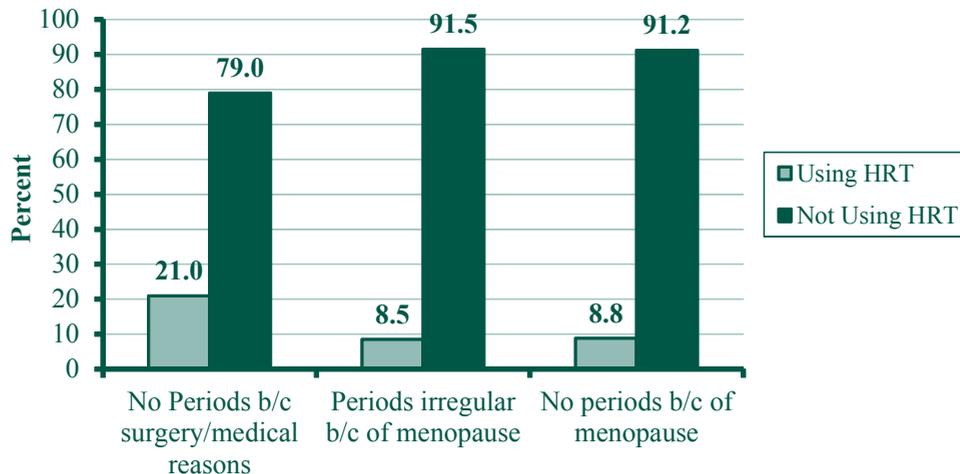
### **Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)**

- Overall, 13.6 percent of women who were not having periods reported using HRT.
- Women who reported not having periods because of surgery/medical reasons reported more HRT use (21.0 percent), than women whose periods were irregular because of menopause (8.5 percent) and those whose periods stopped because of menopause (8.8 percent;  $p < .0001$ ) (see Figure 2).
- Women with income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level reported significantly lower rates of using HRT (7.6 percent) than women above this level (16.2 percent;  $p < .001$ ).
- While not significant, there was a trend for women with health insurance coverage to report higher rates of using HRT (14.1 percent) than women without insurance (8.1 percent).
- There were no significant race/ethnicity or age differences in HRT use among women.

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Figure 2 **Menopause and Use of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) Among Women Ages 18-55, 2007**



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2007

- 1 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Hormone replacement Therapy for the prevention of chronic conditions in postmenopausal women. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Web site. <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstf/uspspmho.htm>. Published May 2005. Accessed March 2009.
- 2 Hersh L, Stefanick ML, Stafford RS. National use of postmenopausal hormone replacement therapy: Annual trends and response to recent evidence. *JAMA*. 2004;291:47-53.
- 3 Health of California's adults, adolescents and children. Findings from California Health Interview Survey 2003 and California Health Information Survey 2001.

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