

Night sweats versus hot flashes

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What's worse—night sweats or hot flashes as they relate to depression and stress? Although both can have a significant effect on a woman's quality of life, a new study out of the University of Massachusetts suggests that night sweats might actually be more stressful. Study results will be presented during The North American Menopause Society

(NAMS) Annual Meeting in Atlanta, October 12-15, 2022.

Many women think of [night sweats](#) and hot flashes as being the same thing that occurs at different times of the day. Although both of these common menopause symptoms produce feelings of being overheated, they are different phenomena. A [hot flash](#) can occur during the day or night and may or may not be associated with sweating, whereas night sweats are periods of intense sweating that occur at night.

Although both night sweats and hot flashes are bothersome, is one worse than the other when it comes to creating stress and depression? That's the question researchers from the University of Massachusetts asked 200 women experiencing menopause.

What they found was that night sweats were significantly associated with depression and stress, whereas hot flashes (even those at night) were significantly associated with only depression after adjusting for menopause status, financial comfort, and marriage. In addition, women who reported the highest hot flash frequency at night had significantly higher depression scores compared with women who had the highest hot flash frequency during other times of the day. These results support previous studies that found that sleep disruptions during menopause have a significant effect on [quality of life](#) and suggest that night sweats may have more severe consequences than hot flashes.

"We know that [sleep disturbances](#) are one of the biggest detriments for women going through menopause, but these results are unique because they show that [women](#) experiencing night sweats, rather than just hot flashes, may be at an even bigger disadvantage," says Sofiya Shreyer, lead author of the study from the Anthropology Department at the University of Massachusetts.

"This study adds to the growing evidence that menopause symptoms

such as [hot flashes](#) and night sweats can significantly detract from a [woman's](#) quality of life and should be taken seriously by healthcare professionals. More research is necessary to fully understand the mechanisms of these symptoms and their overall effect on a woman's menopause experience," says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

Provided by The North American Menopause Society

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