

Menopausal Hormonal Therapy and Asthma-related Symptoms (SAPALDIA 2)

Elisabeth Zemp Stutz¹ Jacqueline Wilde¹ Patricia Staedele¹ Margaret W Gerbase² Nicole Probst-Hensch³ Otto Braendli⁴ Arnold von Eckardstein⁵ Ursula Ackermann-Liebrich¹

¹ Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

² Div. of Pulmonary Medicine, University Hospitals of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

³ Inst. of Social and Prev. Med./Clinical Pathology, Molecular Epidemiology/Cancer Registry of Canton Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

⁴ Zurcher Hoehenklinik Wald, Wald, Switzerland

⁵ Institute for Clinical Chemistry, University Hospital Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland

Background and aim: Whether menopausal hormonal therapy (MHT) has an impact on asthma is still controversial. While an increase of asthma incidence has been observed in the Nurses' Health Study (Troisi 1995) and in a population-based Danish study (Lange 2001), clinical studies have shown favourable effects of MHT on the course of asthma (Kos-Kudla 2001), or no effect of MHT-withdrawal (Hepburn 2001). The association of MHT and asthma-related respiratory symptoms was investigated in the population-based SAPALDIA 2 study.

Methods: In SAPALDIA, a random sample of the Swiss population from 8 study areas was investigated with regards to the health effects from long term exposure to air pollution. In 2002, 3080 women gave information on hormonal therapy and reproductive history (using the ECRHS women's questionnaire). The association between MHT and the prevalence of respiratory symptoms was investigated by logistic regression analyses.

Results: Ever users of MHT were significantly older, more obese, more often smokers, and less educated than never users. Prevalence of ever use of MHT was 31%. Never users of MHT consistently reported lower prevalences of asthma-related symptoms than ever and current users of MHT. Multivariate point estimates were elevated for the associations of ever use of MHT and dyspnea, wheezing and tightness of chest were elevated (odds ratios ranging from 1.2 to 1.8). These associations were modified by smoking status and BMI.

Conclusion: Ever use of hormonal therapy is associated with several asthma-related symptoms in this population-based cohort.