

Trauma and Risk for Menopause- and Aging-related Symptoms among Midlife and Older Women

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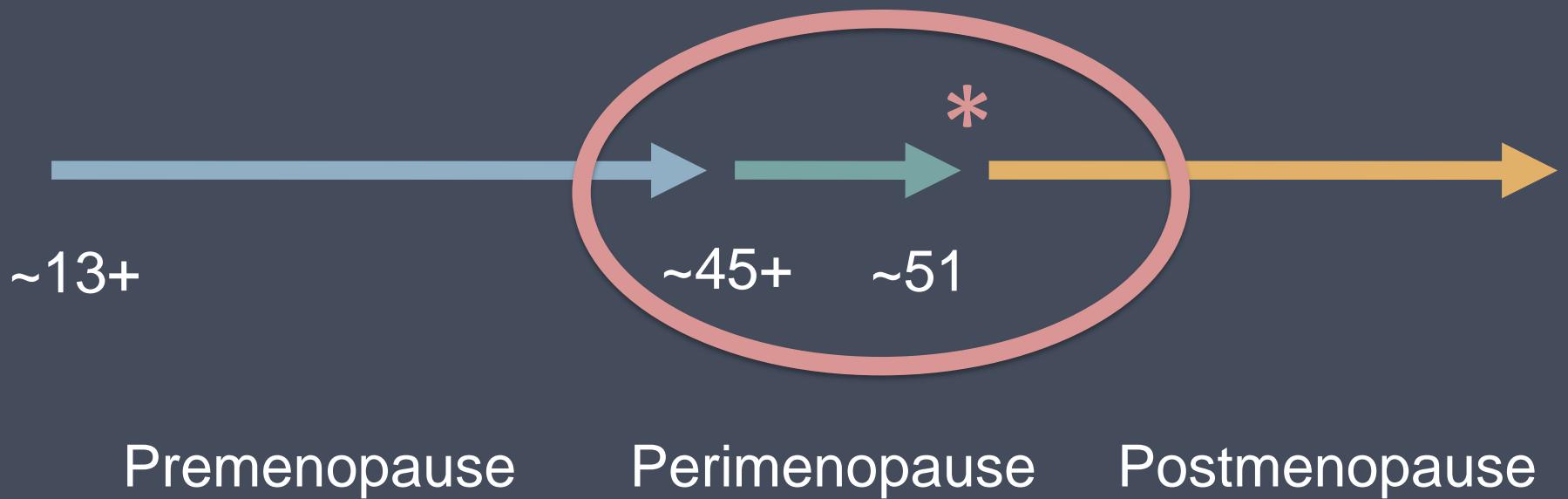
Learning Objectives:

After learning from the presentation, clinicians should be able to:

1. Identify common menopause symptoms and comorbidities in the menopause transition.
2. Recognize unique considerations for women Veterans' experience of the menopause transition.
3. Recognize the importance of trauma-informed care in menopause management, understanding that trauma exposure and its sequelae (including intimate partner violence, sexual trauma, and posttraumatic stress disorder) are associated with menopause symptom burden across multiple domains.

The views expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States government.

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50-80% of midlife women report disruptive menopause symptoms

Vasomotor
Hot flashes
Night sweats

Genitourinary
Vaginal irritation.
Dryness,
Pain with
intercourse

**Sleep
disturbance**

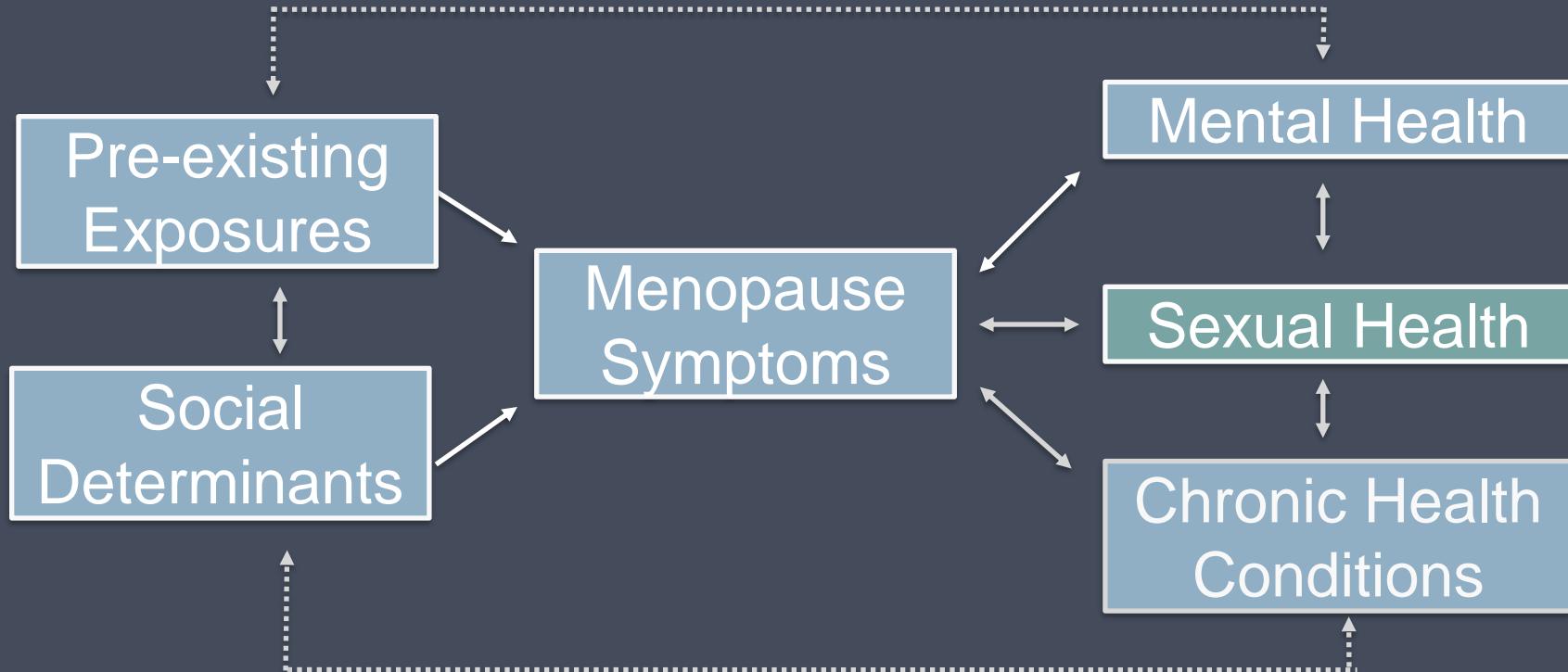
**Mood
symptoms**

Matthews, 2013; Lobo, 2014; Freeman, 2010

The menopause transition is a period of vulnerability for health and mental health

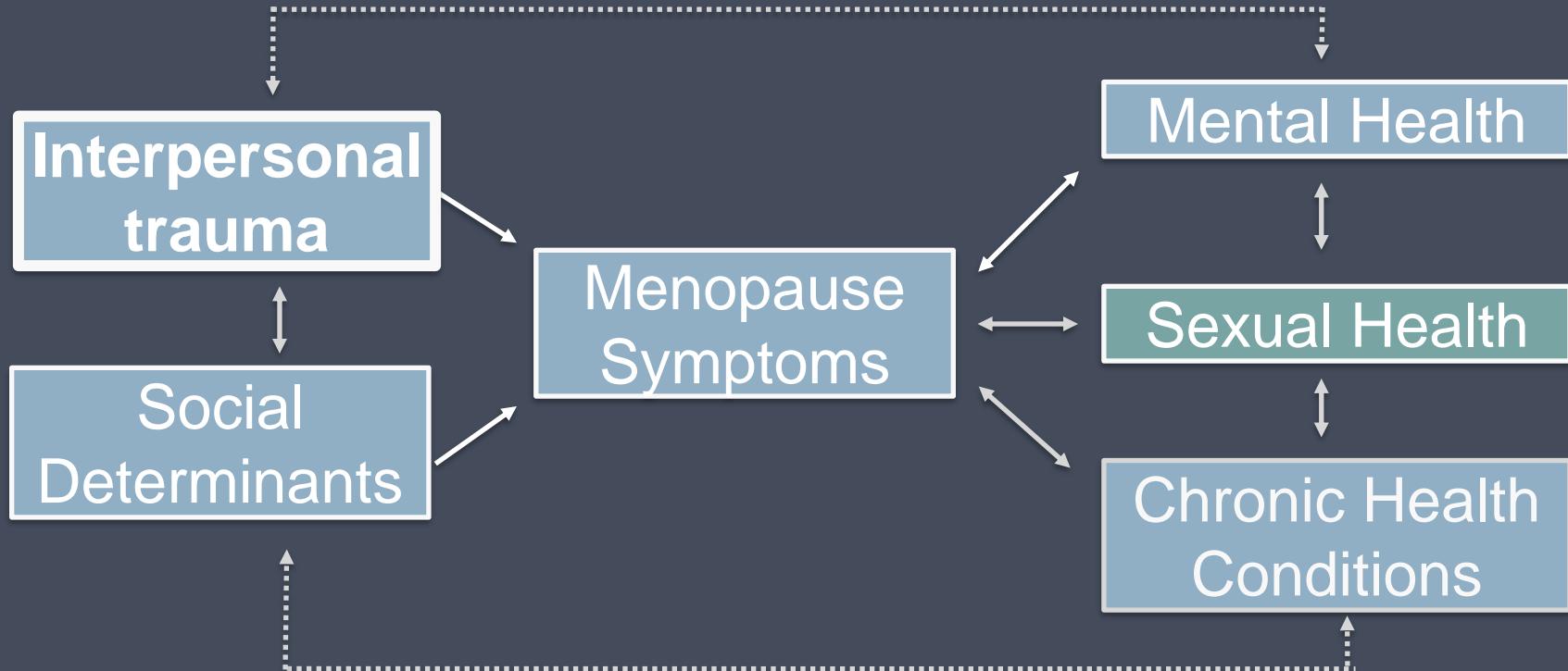


Sexual health in the menopause transition (and beyond)



chronological and reproductive aging

Sexual health in the menopause transition (and beyond)



chronological and reproductive aging

An estimated 1 in 4 women have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual assault



Interpersonal trauma is common among women, and impacts health

- **Mental health:** Depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, eating disorders, substance use disorders, suicide
- **General health:** Cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, sleep disorders, somatic symptoms, health risk behaviors, poor self-rated health
- **Sexual health:** Sexual dysfunction, pain, low satisfaction

Does interpersonal trauma increase risk for menopause symptoms and health changes in midlife and older women?

Study 1: Interpersonal trauma, PTSD, and menopause symptoms in midlife and older women



n=2002
Mean age: 61 (10)
Postmenopausal: 79%



College+: 22%

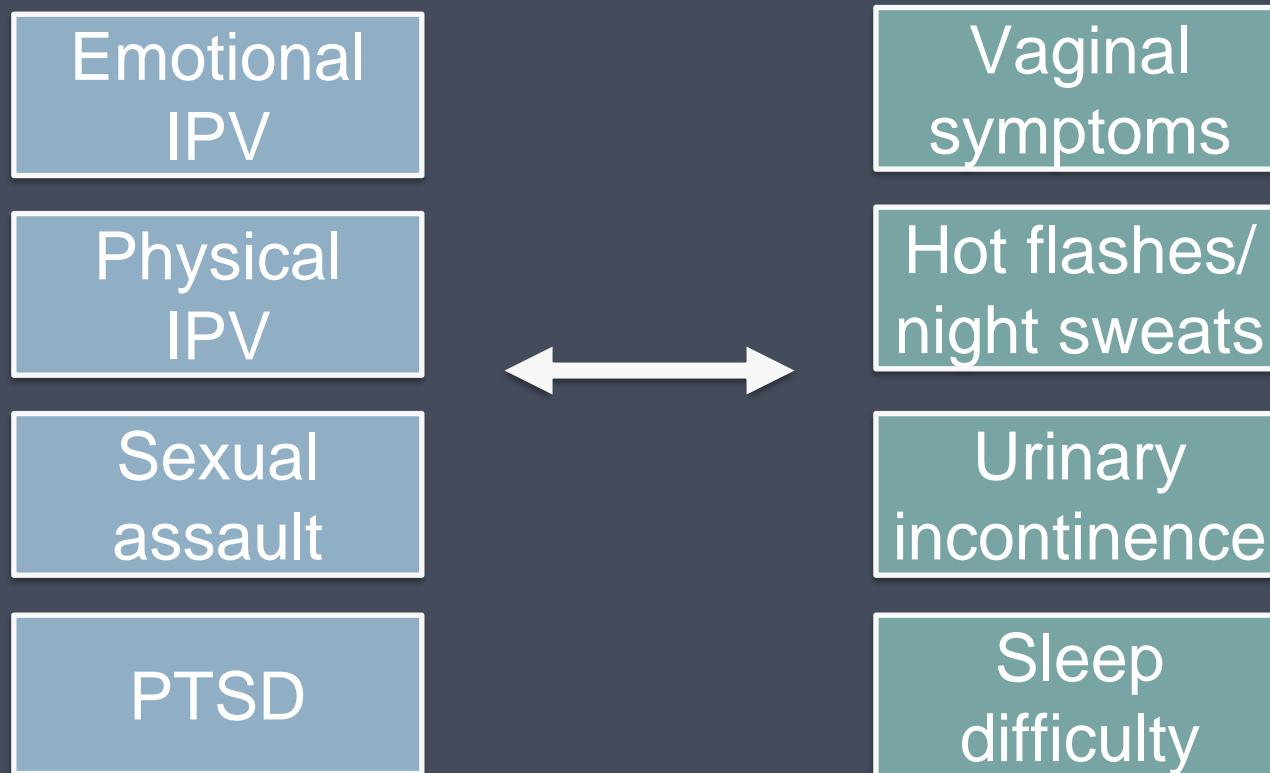


Non-Latina white: 39%
Latina white: 20%
Black: 21%
AAPI: 19%

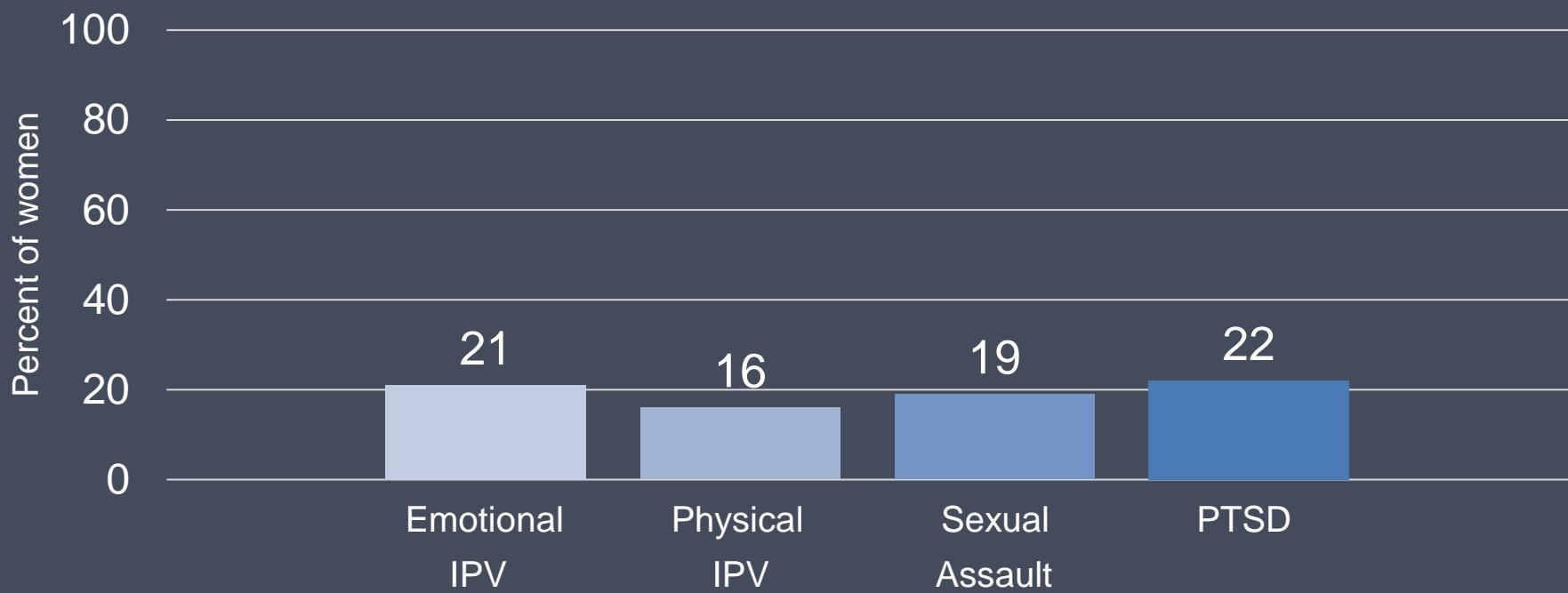
Reproductive Risks of Incontinence in Kaiser (RRISK)

- Kaiser Permanente enrollees, aged 40-85, randomly selected within age and race strata
- Study designed to assess medical and psychosocial predictors of urinary incontinence
- Cross-sectional data from wave 3 (2008-2012) included interpersonal violence, PTSD

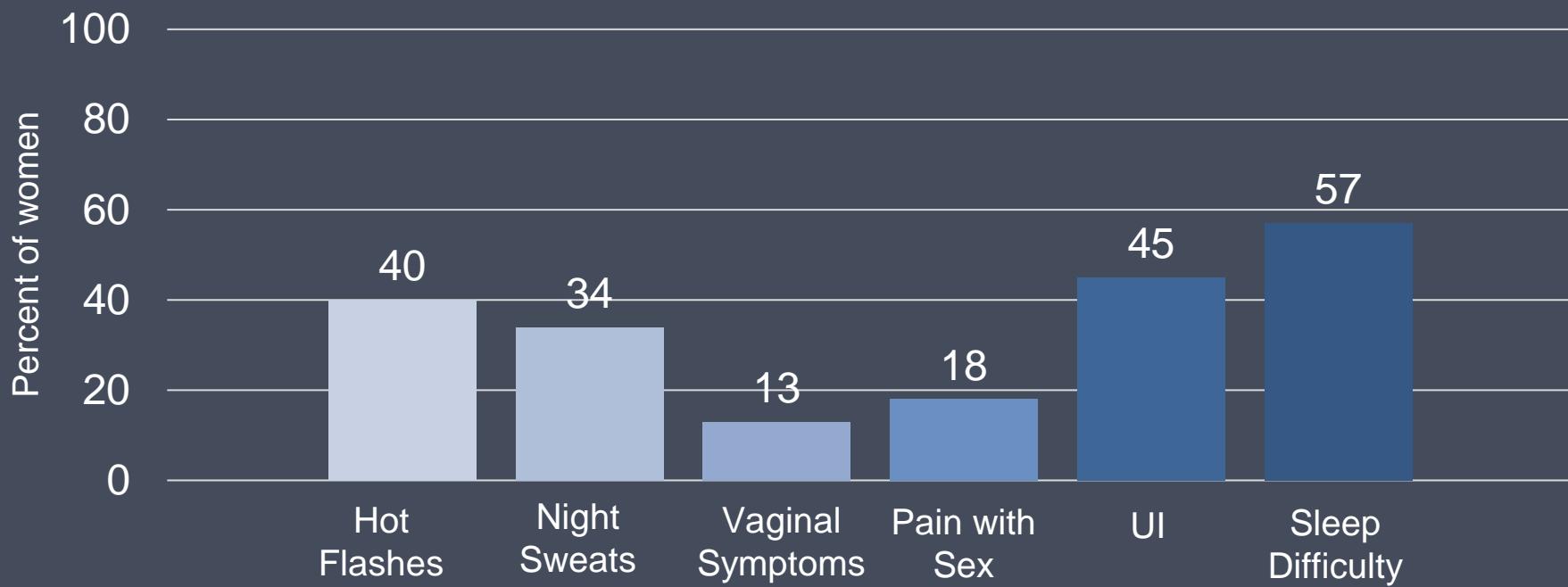
Interpersonal trauma, PTSD, and menopause symptoms in midlife and older women



Results: Interpersonal Trauma and PTSD



Results: Menopause Symptoms



RRISK: Emotional IPV, sexual assault associated with symptoms

Emotional Intimate Partner Violence

Night sweats

Vaginal pain with intercourse

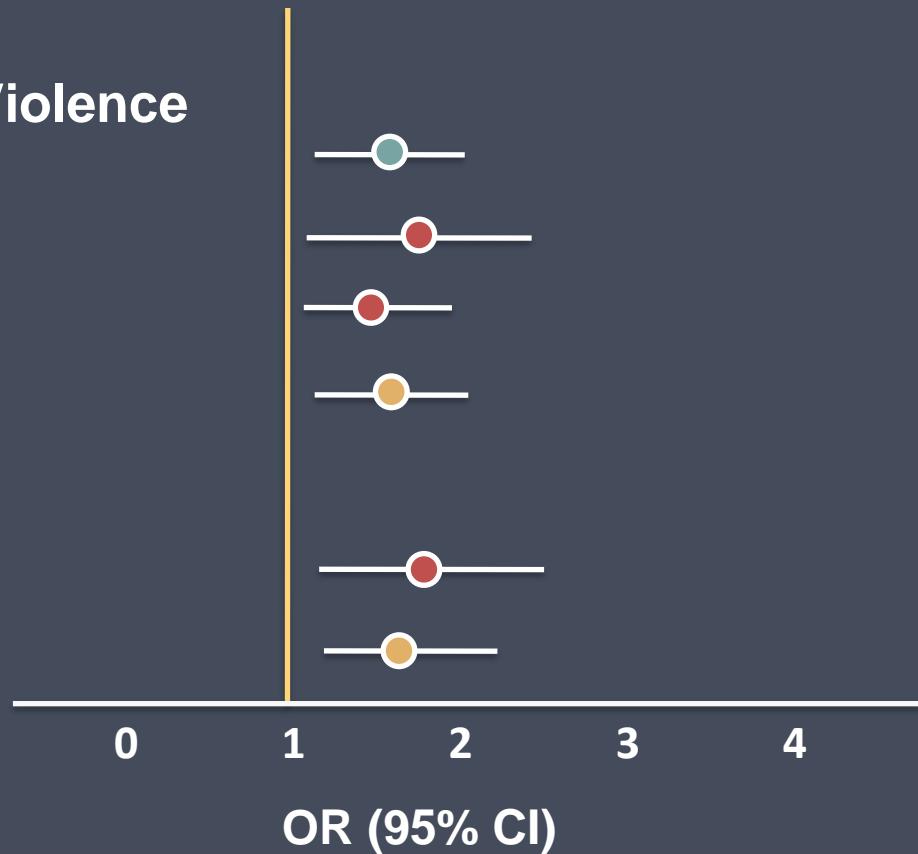
Urinary incontinence

Sleep difficulty

Sexual Assault

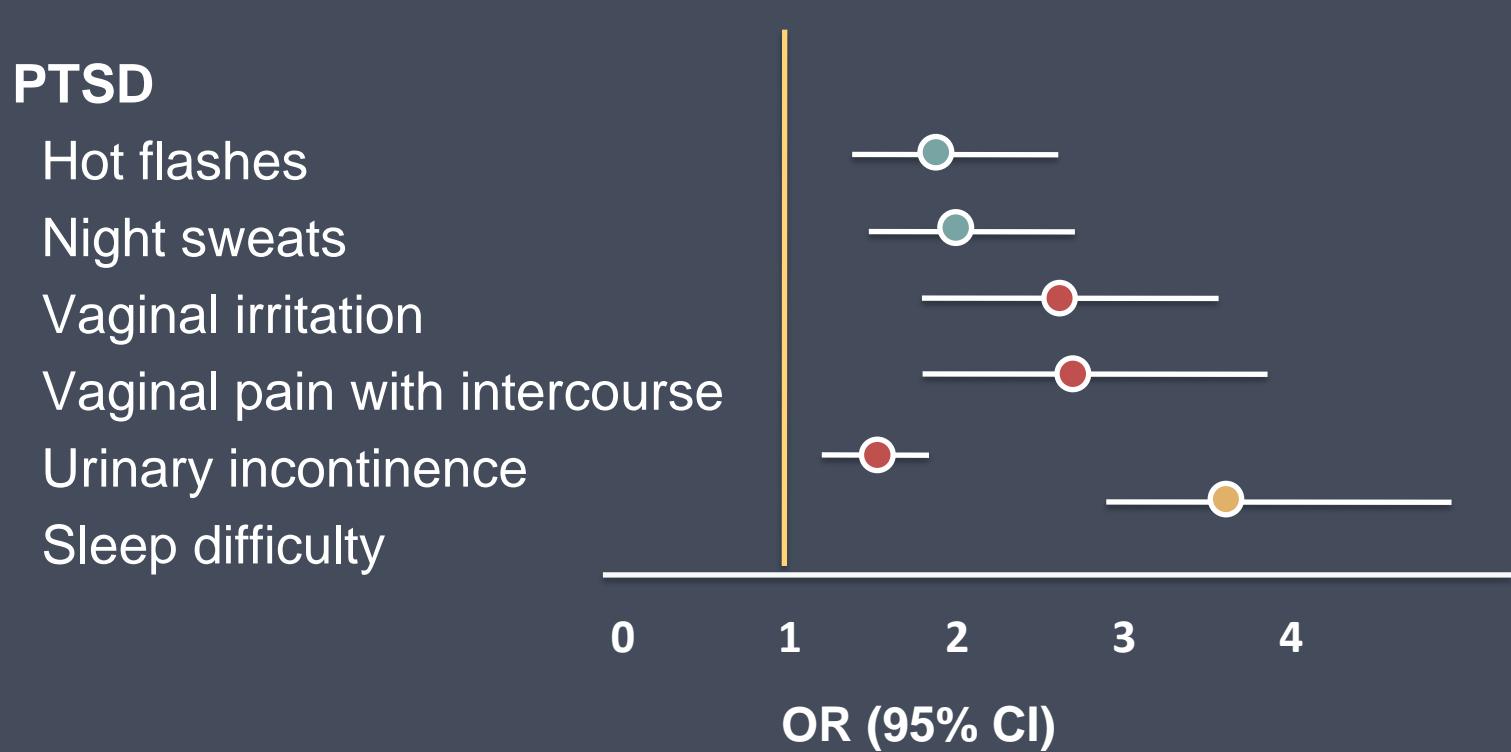
Vaginal pain with intercourse

Sleep difficulty



Adjusted for age, race/ethnicity, education, menopause status, parity, hormone therapy, BMI

RRISK: PTSD associated with symptoms



Adjusted for age, race/ethnicity, education, menopause status, parity, hormone therapy, BMI

Study 2: Interpersonal trauma and genitourinary symptoms in older women



n=1551
Mean age: 69 (2.0)
Postmenopausal: 80%
Sexually active in
past year: 34%



College+: 50%
Married/as: 58%

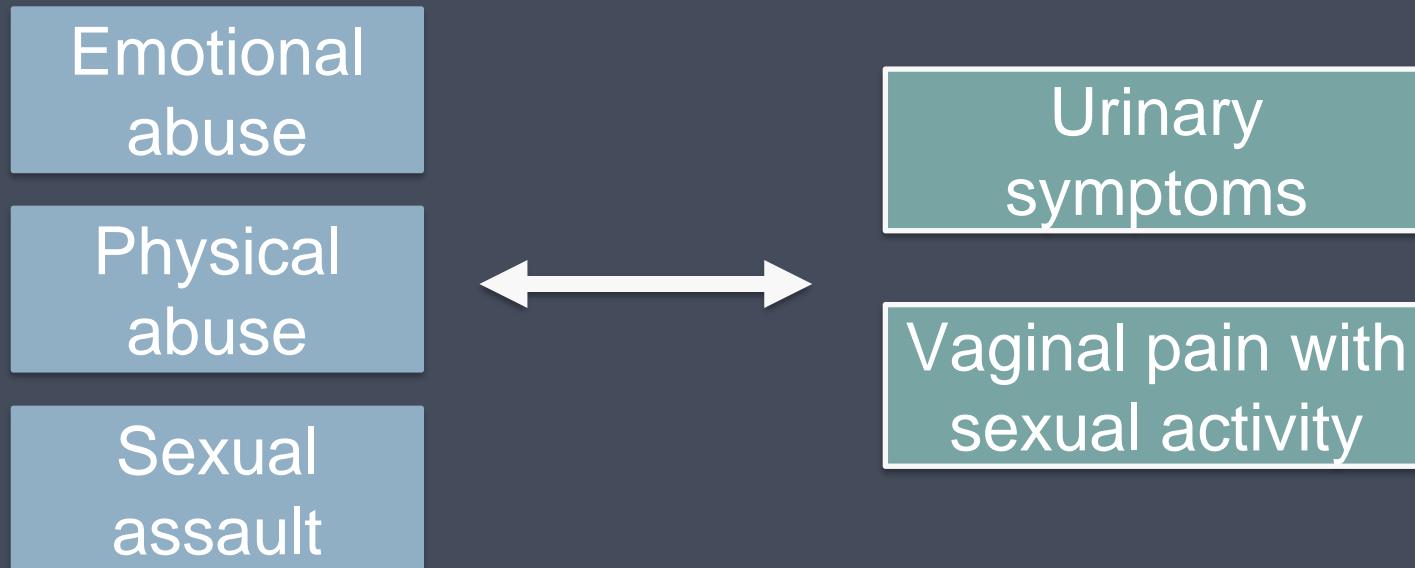


Non-Latina White: 81%
Black: 11%
Hispanic/Latina: 7%

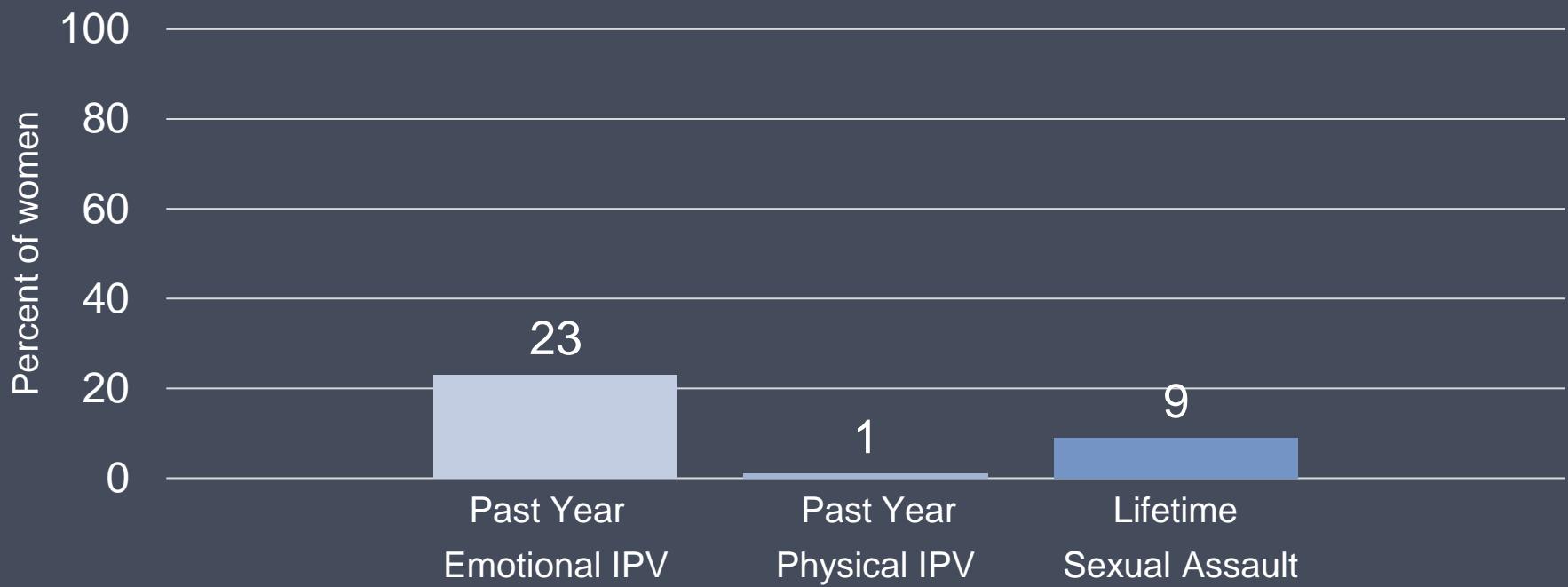
National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP)

- National area probability sample of adults born between 1920-1947
- Home-based study visits, 2005-2006
- Structured-item self-report measures: Trauma exposures, current symptoms
- Self-swabs: Vaginal cellular maturation (a tissue-specific marker of urogenital aging)

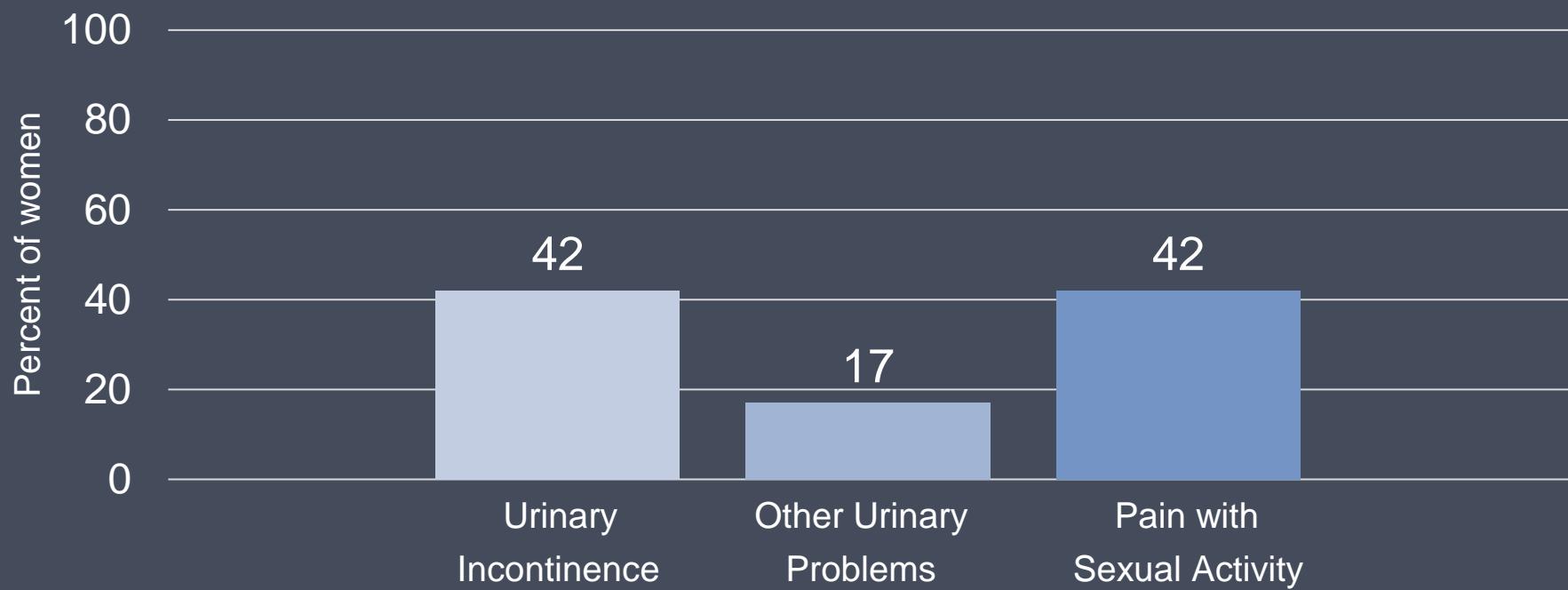
Interpersonal trauma and genitourinary symptoms in older women



Results: Interpersonal Trauma Exposure



Results: Genitourinary Symptoms



NSHAP: Emotional abuse, sexual assault associated with genitourinary symptoms

Emotional abuse

Urinary incontinence

Urinary problems

Pain with sexual activity

Sexual assault

Urinary incontinence

Urinary problems

Pain with sexual activity

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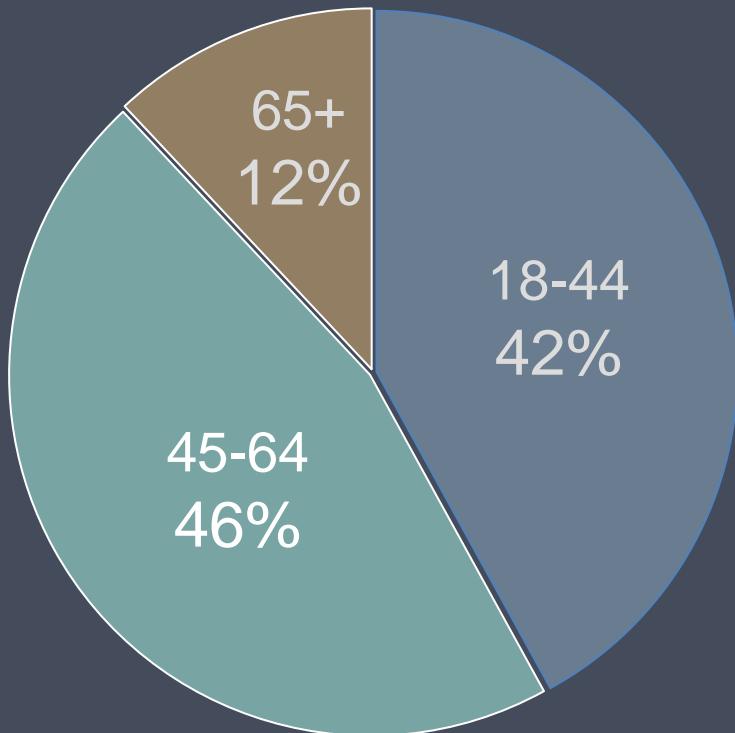
Adjusted for age, race/ethnicity, BMI, education, marital status, parity, hormone therapy, mood symptoms, self-reported health

Gibson et al., AJOG, 2019

Interpersonal trauma is even more common among women Veterans



Almost half of women Veterans are in midlife



Frayne et al. Sourcebook, Volume 4.

Study 3: Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and menopause symptoms in midlife women Veterans



n=232
Mean age: 56 (5)
Postmenopausal: 80%

White: 74%
Black: 10%
Hispanic/Latina: 10%
Other: 13%



College+: 49%
Mean BMI: 30 (7)

25% LGB/Q

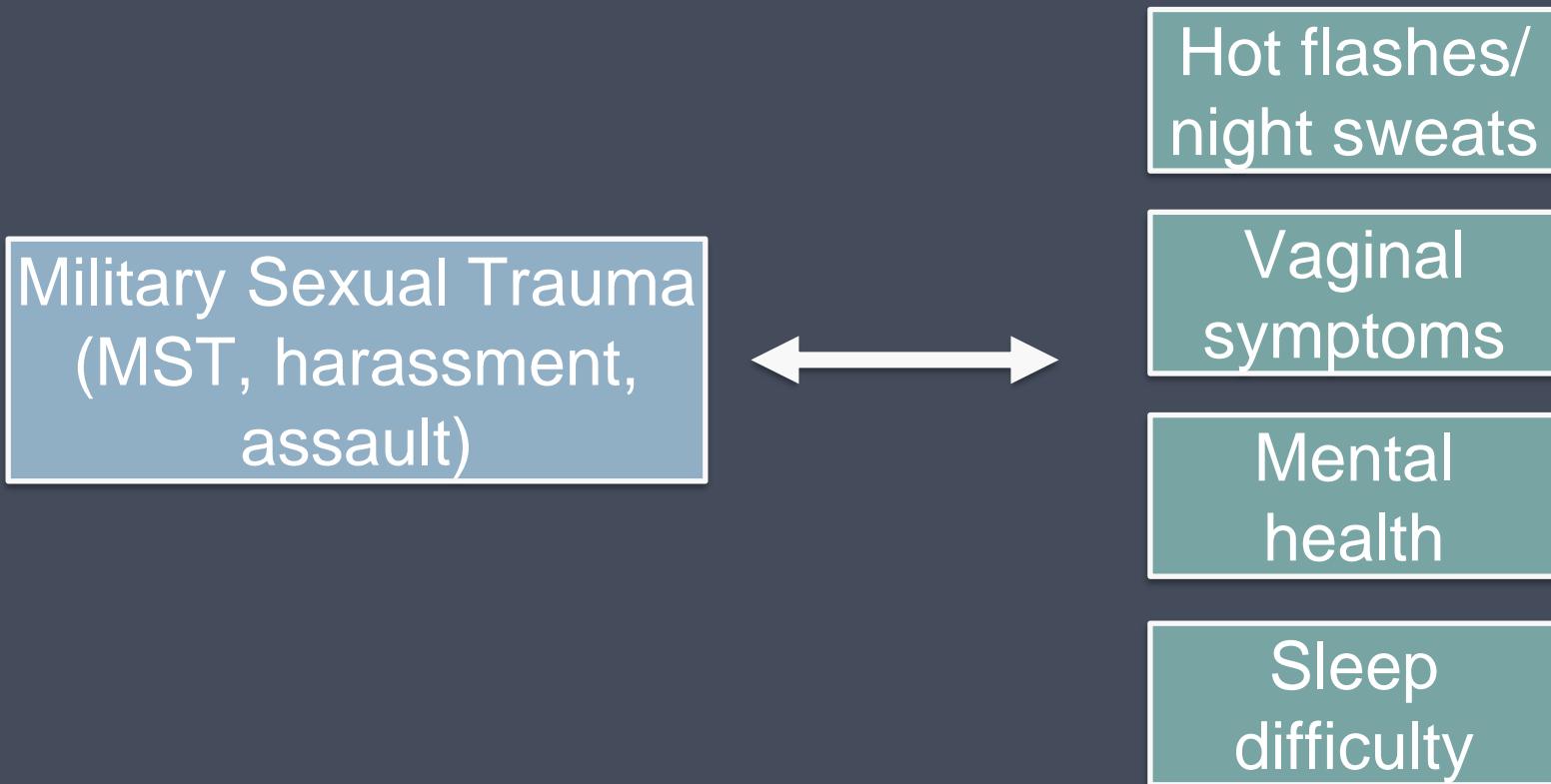


3% Vietnam era
42% Peace time
52% Gulf War
19% OEF/OIF/OND

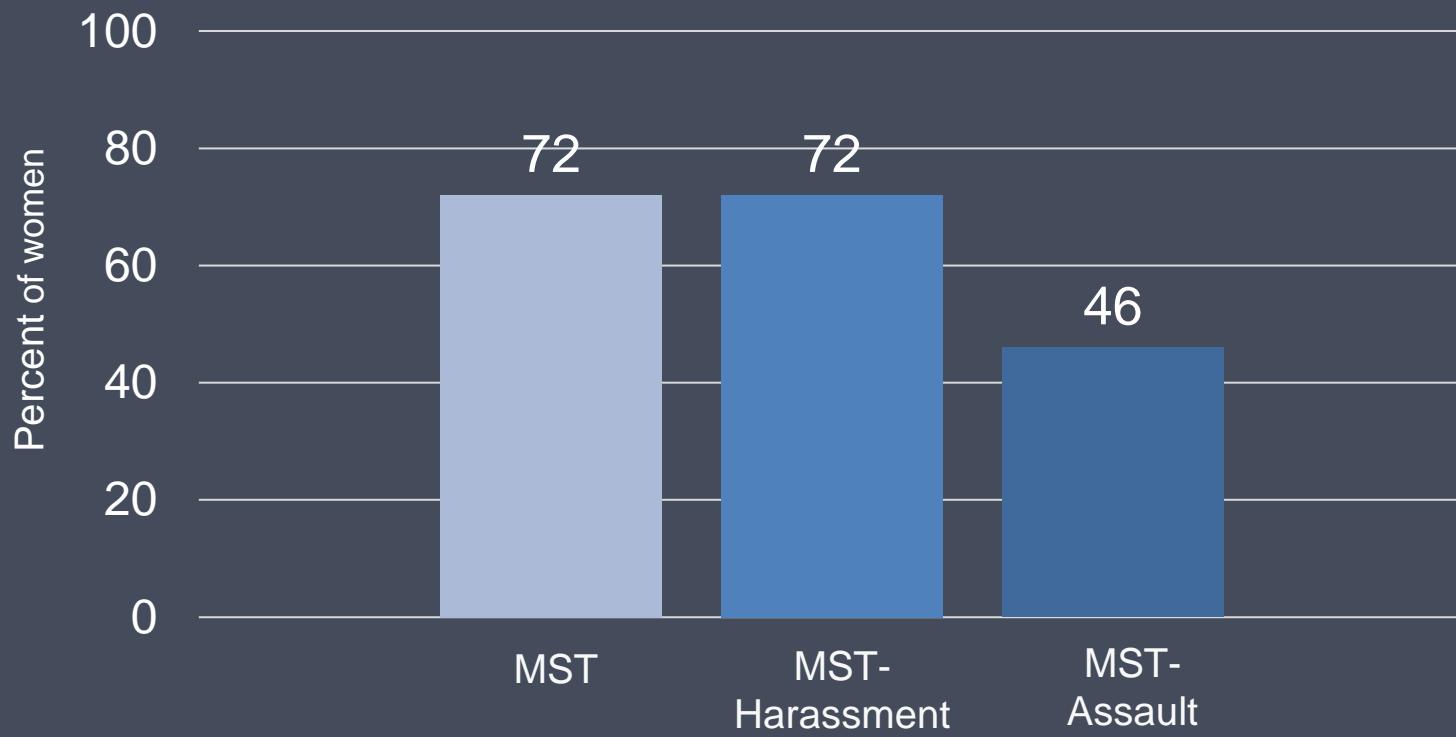
Midlife Women Veterans Study (MWVS)

- Women Veterans enrolled in Northern CA VAs
- Mailed/web-based surveys, 2019-2020
- Structured-item self-report measures and validated questionnaires: Trauma exposures, current symptoms, mental health

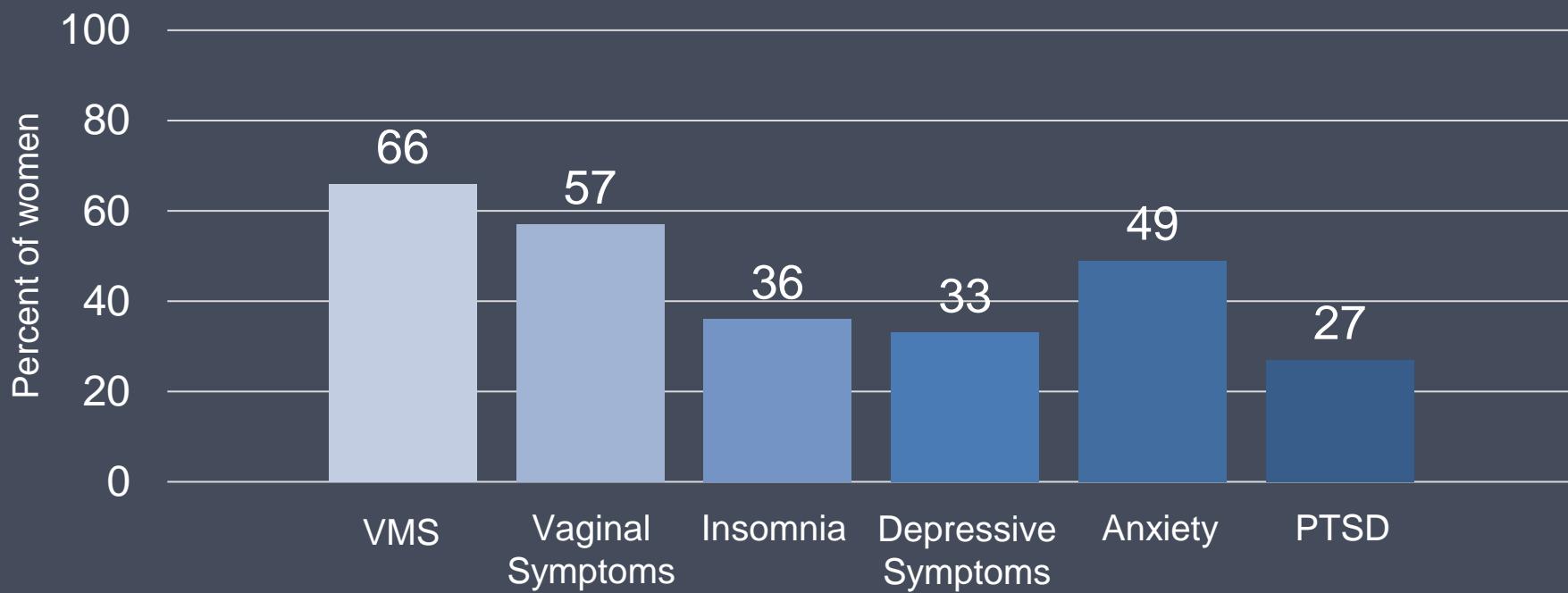
Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and menopause symptoms in midlife women Veterans



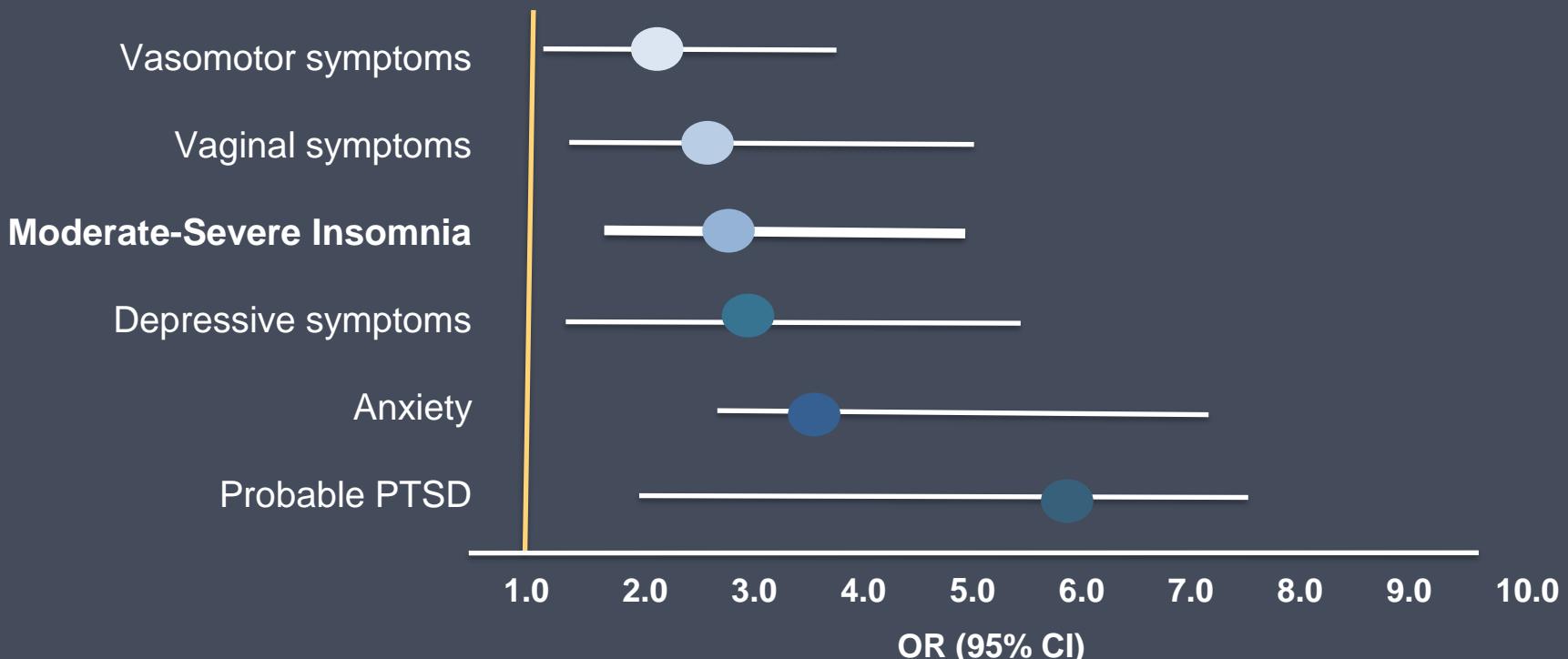
Results: Military Sexual Trauma (MST)



Results: Menopause Symptoms and Mental Health



Military Sexual Trauma is associated with menopause and mental health symptoms



Adjusted for age, race, ethnicity, education, BMI, and menopause status

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- Interpersonal trauma exposure is common among women across the lifespan, and particularly among women Veterans
- Midlife and older women who have experienced interpersonal trauma may be at elevated risk for disruptive menopause symptoms, clinical insomnia, and mental health comorbidity
- Highlights importance of recognizing potential long-term impact of trauma, and providing trauma-informed care for all

Thank you!

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Reproductive Risk for Incontinence in Kaiser (RRISK)
National Social Health, Life, and Aging Project (NSHAP)

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