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Title: SKIN WRINKLES AND RIGIDITY IN EARLY POSTMENOPAUSAL WOMEN VARY BY RACE/ETHNICITY: BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN THE SKIN ANCILLARY STUDY OF THE KEEPS TRIAL

Objective: We previously reported a retrospective study showing that long term Hormone Therapy (HT) was associated with less skin wrinkling and rigidity.(Wolff, Fert Ster 2005) Currently this association is being tested in a prospective RCT of participants enrolled in the Kronos Early Estrogen Prevention Study (KEEPS). KEEPS is a multicenter, randomized, double blinded, placebo controlled trial evaluating the effects of hormone therapy in recently (within 3 years) menopausal women.

Design: Here, we characterize wrinkling and rigidity in recently menopausal women using baseline data from this multicenter ancillary trial.

Materials and Methods: KEEPS participants at Yale University and AECOM were enrolled in this skin study. Baseline skin measurements were taken prior to randomization. Skin wrinkling was assessed at 11 areas along the face and neck using the Lemperle Scale, a validated visual scoring method that grades wrinkles from 0 (minimal/absent) to 5 (severe). Skin rigidity was assessed at the forehead and cheek using a durometer. Associations between participant characteristics and skin aging assessments were compared utilizing Pearsons correlation analyses and Student's t test.

Results: 93 participants (mean age 53.4 +/-2.9 SD years, who were a mean of 22.2 +/-1.6 SD months since menopause) of 163 possible participants completed a baseline skin assessment. Advancing age was associated with a worsening wrinkle score at the Forehead (FH), Cheek (CK), Periauricular (PA), Periorbital (PO), Nasolabial Fold (NL), Marionette (MA), Chin (CN), and Total Score (TS), $p < 0.05$. Durometer scores were not associated with aging or time since menopause. More severe neck creases were associated with a history of smoking and worsening skin rigidity (higher durometer scores) at both the FH and Face ($p < 0.05$).

Ethnic variations in skin aging were appreciated. Black participants ($n=19$) had significantly lower wrinkle scores at all locations except the CK. In this subpopulation, worsening glabellar wrinkles (GF, frown lines)(1) correlated with durometer scores of both the FH and Face and (2) increased with time since menopause($p < 0.05$). Alternatively, in the non-black population, FH wrinkles correlated only with FH durometer scores ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: The KEEPS skin ancillary study offers a unique opportunity to assess skin changes in the early menopause and provide insight on the relative contributions of aging and menopause on skin aging. Racial differences in baseline skin parameters will need to be taken into account.

Support: RSDP, KLRI

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