Delaying menopause? Why keeping ovaries working longer could potentially prevent age-related diseases

The ovaries, in particular, appear to be connected to virtually every aspect of a woman’s health.

They also abruptly stop performing their primary role in midlife. Once that happens, a woman enters menopause, which accelerates her aging and the decline of other organ systems, like the heart and the brain. While women, on average, live longer than men, they spend more time living with diseases or disabilities.

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There is some evidence, mostly in animals, that suggests prolonging ovarian function can improve health and increase longevity. In mice, for example, transplanting an ovary from a younger animal into an older one lengthens the older mouse’s life.

Scientists are now experimenting with different ways to prolong ovarian function and delay the onset of menopause in humans.

One company, Oviva Therapeutics, is in the early stages of testing mainly in mice and cats whether a pharmaceutical version of anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH), which modulates how many follicles mature in each menstrual cycle, could be used to reduce how many eggs are lost.

The idea is that if a woman loses fewer eggs, she can hold on to her ovarian reserves and the ovaries’ functionality for longer, [Oviva Therapeutics co-founder Dr. Daisy] Robinton said.

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