Objective: The aim of this clinical study was to evaluate the effect of natural S-equol, a daidzein metabolite, on reducing menopausal symptoms. The impressive response of the users was also assessed.

Methods: (1) In a double-blind placebo-controlled trial, 160 equol nonproducing, postmenopausal Japanese women who experienced at least 1 hot flush/day were randomly assigned to consume 10?mg/day S-equol (n =77) or placebo (n =83) for 12 weeks. Participants completed a standardized menopausal symptom checklist and rated five common menopause symptoms by a visual analog scale at baseline, week 12, and week 18 (6-week post intervention). Physical, blood, and urine examinations were conducted on each occasion. The final number completed the trial was 126. (2) In an observation study, 39 menopausal patients regardless of the S-equol producing capacity took the supplement for 12 weeks and answered the questioner asking the subjective impression on the supplement use.

Results: (1) After the 12-week intervention, the S-equol group had a greater reduction from baseline in hot flushes frequency compared with the placebo group (-58.7%, vs. -34.5%, p = 0.009). The severity of hot flushes and neck or shoulder muscle stiffness significantly decreased in the S-equol group compared with the placebo group. No changes in clinical parameters or serious adverse effects were observed. (2) In the practical trial, 84.6% of the users showed the response of general improvement. Majority of them (88%) wanted to use the supplement continuously after the end of trial period. Conclusions: This is the first trial to show beneficial effects of a 10-mg natural S-equol supplement on major menopausal symptoms, particularly hot flushes and neck or shoulder muscle stiffness, in postmenopausal women of equol non-producers. This supplement offers a promising alternative for management of menopausal symptoms.