



July 2017

e-update



PCWHF Conference 2017

The conference is now open for registration. It will be held on 8th November at The Met Hotel, Leeds.

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

This month we are focusing on menopause management. Since the publication of the NICE guidance on [Diagnosis and Management of the Menopause \(NG23\)](#) in 2015 and more recently the [NICE Menopause Quality Standard \(QS143\)](#), there has been an improved understanding of the importance of managing women suffering with menopausal symptoms and using the opportunity to improve their long term health outcomes.

The blog below is written by Louise Newson who is a GP and menopause expert working in Solihull and a PCWHF Board member. She shares her thoughts on menopause management and signposts to relevant resources for use in primary care.

Thank you to all who completed the survey on contraception and LARC access last month.

> [LARC Survey Results](#)

The results continue to demonstrate a reduction in access to LARC from primary care and an ongoing uncertainty about future funding. The information we gain from these surveys is important and will be shared with the RCGP, FSRH and PHE.

We apologise but we are asking for another few minutes of your time to complete a survey on menopause care. This is attached at the end of the section written by Louise.

Anne Connolly
Chair of the PCWHF

MENOPAUSE UPDATE

The menopause is a natural event in a woman's life and the average age of the menopause in the UK is 51 years. The majority of women experience symptoms of the menopause and these are often to the detriment of their home and work lives. Many women are not seeking medical help for their symptoms and the menopause is still often seen as a "taboo" subject. At least half of post menopausal women experience symptoms of vaginal dryness which is not talked about to a healthcare professional.

Increasingly, I am hearing stories from women which suggest to me that some GPs have not read or understood the NICE guidance on Diagnosis and Management of the Menopause which were produced in November 2015¹. Here are some quotes from a handful of these women:

- "My GP refused to give me HRT and sent me away with antidepressants."
- "I was initially given the wrong type of HRT so I was given unopposed oestrogen which resulted in me having awful, distressing and invasive tests to my womb."
- "My GP has offered me antidepressants to help with the hot flushing as I have high blood pressure she will not give me HRT."
- "My doctor looks like she wants to cry when you talk HRT!"
- "My GP told me he didn't give HRT until you haven't had a period for two years."

The negative publicity following the WHI study more than a decade ago has led to many women, and many healthcare professionals, being concerned and anxious about HRT. This has resulted in many women needlessly suffering with menopausal symptoms and also more importantly increasing their future risks of important conditions such as cardiovascular disease and

osteoporosis. There are now excellent, clearly written and research-based guidelines which we all should be working from ^{1,2,3}.

The PCWHF has also produced an excellent [HRT Myths Uncovered](#) sheet which I constantly give out to my patients with excellent response. These should be made more widely available for women.

I have written booklets entitled [Menopause and Me](#) which are for women to understand more about the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment options of the menopause. These are available free for your patients.

The impact of menopausal symptoms on the workplace is huge and should not be underestimated; a recent survey showed that 81% of perimenopausal and menopausal women were experiencing symptoms that were adversely affecting their ability to work. Around 3.5 million women aged over 50 years are currently in employment in the UK. The employment rate for women in the UK has increased in the past few decades and women now represent nearly a half of the UK labour force. This means that many more women are being affected by symptoms of their menopause, often to the detriment of their families, work and life in general.

> [Menopause and work](#)

The Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM) produced some clear guidelines entitled [Guidance on Menopause and the Workplace](#). These practical guidelines aim to help women experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them and their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms.

I have developed booklets which can help women themselves as well as their employers learn more about the menopause. These have been written in conjunction with the West Midlands Police and Fire Brigade who I work regularly with to help their menopausal women at work.

> [Menopause and me; In the workplace](#)

Sadly, the training regarding the menopause at an undergraduate and postgraduate level is still not adequate for most healthcare professionals and there is still so much confusion regarding menopause and HRT.

> [Myths and misconceptions of HRT and the menopause](#)

Many GPs I speak to are nervous or confused about the role of testosterone in women. Reduced or lack of libido is very common in menopausal women and the NICE guidance clearly states that women with low libido should be considered for testosterone if their libido does not improve with HRT1. The PCWHF have developed this really useful guide:

> [Ten Tips on Testosterone Use for Women](#)

This article in the BJFM should help to dispel any myths and misconceptions.

> [Postmenopausal testosterone therapy: Myths and misconceptions](#)

Every time I lecture about the menopause I am delighted that there are so many healthcare professionals asking questions and keen to learn more about the active management of the menopause and perimenopause. There really does seem to be a real thirst for knowledge and the time has never been better to learn about the optimal management.

I have also created a website with plenty of information on it for women to download. There is a separate section on this website for healthcare professionals.

> [Menopause doctor](#)

This brief survey has been written to assess past training and also current knowledge on the menopause and HRT. The results from this survey will really help us to focus the PCWHF's energy on providing more detailed and targeted educational content so I really appreciate your time on completing this!

Dr Louise R Newson

GP, menopause expert and board member of the PCWHF

[Take the survey](#)

References

1. [Menopause: diagnosis and management. NICE 2015](#)
2. R. J. Baber, N. Panay & A. Fenton the IMS Writing Group (2016) 2016 IMS Recommendations on women's midlife health and menopause hormone therapy, *Climacteric*, 19:2, 109-150
3. The British Menopause Society & Women's Health Concern 2016 recommendations on hormone replacement therapy in menopausal women. H Hamoda, N Panay, R Arya, M Savvas, on behalf of The British Menopause Society and Women's Health Concern. *Post Reproductive Health*. December 1, 2016; pp. 165–183

RESOURCES

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is pleased to announce the launch of the Women's Health Educational Framework. This is a new library of resources for women's health relevant for continuous professional development (CPD) for GPs and other primary healthcare professionals.

This Framework is the result of a ground-breaking partnership between the RCGP, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare

(FSRH). It brings national guidance and educational resources produced and accredited by the RCGP together with high quality resources from both the RCOG and FSRH in order to enable GPs to find the resources that they need for both patient care and their own CPD.

Designed to help users meet their learning needs, the resources have been organised in a clear and user-friendly format enabling quick access to the content of interest. The library is divided into the following sections, each of which covers a different area of women's health: Maternal Health; Sexual and Reproductive Health; Pre-Menopause; and Peri/Post-Menopause. Resources comprise eLearning modules, national guidance, courses, workshops, journal articles and reviews on clinical or managerial topics of relevance to GPs and other primary healthcare professionals.

The Framework is available free of charge to all users* through the RCGP Learning website.

> [RCGP eLearning framework](#)

*Use of some resources within the framework may incur a fee

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) has developed a free e-learning course on contraception, with support from PHE and the FSRH. The aim of this course is to inform professionals so that they can give accurate information and dispel any myths. It is not intended to form a comprehensive reference. Details about contraindications and risk factors would always need to be discussed with the prescribing professional. The course should be helpful in ensuring non-specialist practitioners have basic but accurate information about the range of contraception methods.

> [RCGP eLearning course on contraception](#)

The British Journal of Family Medicine Women's Health supplement is an excellent resource and is very relevant to our work in primary care. The latest edition included an excellent article on *Ring pessaries in clinical practice* written by Dr Clare Spencer – a GPSI gynae from Leeds.

> [Ring pessaries in clinical practice](#)

WEBINARS

A series of six free to attend webinars.

Myths & PMS

Date: Wednesday 13th September 2017 at 7pm

Speakers: Dr Carrie Sadler & Dr Caroline Cooper

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Date: Wednesday 4th October 2017 at 7pm

Speakers: Dr Sarah Gray & Dr Louise Newson

HPV

Date: Wednesday 1st November 2017 at 7pm

Speakers: Dr Anne Connolly & Dr Christine Corrin

Combined Hormonal

Date: Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 7pm

Speakers: Dr Paula Briggs & Dr Julie Oliver

[> Registration and further information](#)

The PCWHF are launching a new set of **guidelines on urogenital atrophy** by running two webinars.

Date: Tuesday 19th September 2017

Speaker: Dr Louise Newson

Date: Wednesday 11th October

Speakers: Dr Carrie Sadler & Dr Louise Newson

[> Registration and further information](#)

EVENTS

Study Day on Women's Health

National Association for Premenstrual Syndrome (NAPS) on Saturday 30th September 2017

The Royal College of Nursing

20 Cavendish Square

London

W1G 0RN

[> Meeting agenda](#)

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