
■ Hormones not needed in all menopausal women

Breast cancer specialist Dr. Susan Love reports in her book, *Making Informed Choices About Menopause* that not all menopausal women need to be on hormones.

"What concerns me most," she reports, "is the message being put out there that every woman needs to be on hormones for their whole life. It's just not true. We need to look critically at what data we do and don't have."

Women often are the recipients of societal and health care prejudices that tend to look at certain normal functions as disease processes. Says Love, "The idea that menopausal women are somehow handicapped is more a reflection of our values and prejudices than science."

Less risky alternatives such as diet and exercise may be more valuable. "All drugs carry risk," comments Love, "taking drugs may be medically shortsighted." ▲

■ Hormone replacement therapy increases risk of breast cancer

Researchers at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles have found that women using progestin-estrogen combinations of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) dramatically increase their chances of developing breast cancer. The study was highlighted in the February 16, 2000 issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

Progestin-estrogen combinations became popular after it was shown that estrogen alone, in estrogen replacement therapy (ERT), increased a woman's chances of developing cancer of the lining of the uterus.

In the study, which involved 3500 women, the researchers report that estrogen-only replacement therapy increased the risk of breast cancer by 6% for every five years of use. Five years of progestin-estrogen combination therapy increased a woman's risk of developing breast cancer by 24%, four times that of ERT.

The authors of the study conclude that "this study provides the strongest evidence to date that progestins not only do not protect the breast from the (cancer-causing) effects of estrogen, but also increase substantially the small ERT-related increase in breast cancer."

■ Estrogen Does Not Reduce Risk Of Alzheimer's

Results of a study presented in the March, 2001 issue of *Archives of Neurology* indicate that women taking Estrogen Replacement Therapy (ERT) likely do not reduce their risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

The study, performed at the Boston University School of Medicine in Massachusetts, followed 112,481 women under ERT and 108,925 women in the same age group who were not taking estrogen.

59 cases of Alzheimer's were found in each group. Lead researcher Dr. Sudha Seshadri concluded, "our findings indicate that estrogen replacement therapy use in postmenopausal women is not associated with a substantially reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease, and highlights the need for restraint in advocating postmenopausal estrogen replacement therapy for this purpose."

■ Progesterones No Help For PMS Symptoms

In the November, 2001 issue of this publication we highlighted a study that showed women with PMS symptoms had a high incidence of spinal problems that not only could cause PMS but could be helped through chiropractic care. For years, the medical answer for PMS has been the hormone progesterone. Now comes a study in the October 6, 2001 issue of the *British Medical Journal* that finds progesterone and similar drugs (called pregestogens) are no more effective at treating PMS symptoms than a placebo.

In a review of 14 studies involving more than 900 women, the researchers found that when it came to treating the symptoms of PMS, which include depression, fatigue, irritability, abdominal pain and headache, a placebo was just as effective as the hormone therapy.

Lead author Dr. Katrina Wyatt, from Keele University in Stoke-on-Trent, UK, says, “there is no evidence to support the claimed efficacy of progesterone in the management of premenstrual syndrome.”

She goes on to say that the use of progesterone therapy to treat PMS is based on the unsubstantiated belief that a lack of hormones actually cause the symptoms.

By way of commentary, last month's article on chiropractic care for women who suffer PMS symptoms found that subluxations were a likely cause of their problems. We can't help but believe that a properly functioning body free of subluxation interference will help more people than hormone replacement therapy that is based on a faulty assumption.

■ Natural Estrogen Better For Heart Protection Than Synthetic Hormone

The February 15, 2002 issue of the *American Journal of Epidemiology* reports that a woman's natural supply of estrogen provides more protection from heart disease than Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) using synthetic estrogen.

Researchers at the University Medical Center, Utrecht, the Netherlands, found that women who begin menopause later in life stand less chance of dying from heart disease. They theorize that it's because she is exposed to her own natural estrogen for a longer period of time.

Last July, the American Heart Association issued an advisory saying that there wasn't enough evidence to warrant the use of HRT for the prevention of heart disease.

Commentary: It's possible that medicine is looking in the wrong direction in the first place. First off, early menopause may be normal for that particular woman experiencing it. Secondly, if early-menopausal women are more likely to develop heart disease, it may be from other factors besides reduced estrogen.

Interference in the form of vertebral subluxation, dietary deficiencies, or environmental, chemical or emotional stresses could be causing the body to prematurely shut down estrogen production. Removing these different types of interference makes much more sense to us. Simply replacing natural estrogen with synthetic estrogen does not address the underlying cause of why production is decreasing and certainly doesn't even approach the question of whether or not it's even necessary. When working without interference, our bodies know what they need to do and when to do it.

■ Hormone Replacement Therapy dangerous

Research presented in the July 3, 2002 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and in a special online edition on July 9, 2002 says that Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) does not work to lower the risk of heart disease as previously thought. Instead it actually increases the risk.

Researcher Dr. Jacques Rossouw of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute says, “women should not start or continue to use the therapy [HRT] to prevent heart disease. The findings show that it doesn’t work. In fact, the therapy increases the chance of a heart attack or stroke. Additionally, it increases the risk of cancer and blood clots.”

The actual numbers are startling. According to the researchers, HRT increased the number of strokes by 41%, heart attacks by 29% and breast cancer by 26%.

There are currently more than 13.5 million American women using HRT.

■ Estrogen HRT Useless In Post-Menopausal Patients With Hysterectomy

The September 26, 2005 issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine reports that post-menopausal women who have had hysterectomies experienced no short- or long-term quality of life benefits from taking conjugated equine estrogen Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).

The study the findings come from was stopped early due to an increased risk of stroke and lack of overall health benefits in the 10,739 post-menopausal women involved. Randomly placed into a control group or the group receiving HRT, the women all had hysterectomy and were between 50 and 79 years of age.

All of the women completed 6 specific measures of quality of life at the beginning of the study and at 1 year. 1189 women also completed the questionnaire 3 years after the study began.

Comparing the HRT group to the control group revealed no significant improvements in general health, physical functioning, pain, vitality, role functioning, mental health, depression, cognitive function, or sexual satisfaction at the end of the first year. The extended three-year treatment group also showed absolutely no improvements.