

Menopause Symptoms and Breast Cancer

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3/13/2010

Speaker Information

- Practice/Certifications

- Women's Health Care Nurse Practitioner

- Certified Menopause Clinician – North American Menopause Society
 - Sexual Educator Certification

- Disclosures

- BLOOM Study – BioSante

What does menopause mean to women?

- Cessation of menstrual periods
- End of reproductive capacity
- Hormonal changes
- Change of life, a life stage
- End of prior symptoms
- Beginning of new symptoms
- Changing emotions
- Changing body
- Aging process
- Disease risks
- Medical care needs

Woods et al. *Menopause* 1999.

Symptoms that May Be Associated with Menopause Transition/Aging

- Early: Hot flashes, insomnia, irritability, mood changes, decreased libido, sexual changes, abnormal bleeding, decreased ability to concentrate or recall, headaches
- Intermediate: vaginal atrophy (dryness), urinary incontinence, skin atrophy (wrinkles), facial hair
- Late: osteoporosis, CAD, dementia, colon cancer, age related macular degeneration

Miscellaneous health complaints possibly related to menopause

- Weight redistribution
- Palpitations
- Formications (skin crawling)
- Joint pain and muscle stiffness
- Headache
- Changes in eyes, hair, teeth/gums, skin

Hot Flashes

- Episodes of flushing, sweating, and intense warmth on upper body and face
- Skin temperature increases 1-7 °C, returns to normal gradually, chill can follow
- More severe after induced menopause

Causes of hot flashes

- Precise cause is unknown
- Estrogen levels alone not predictive
- Other conditions: thyroid disease, epilepsy, infection, etc.
- Drugs
- Lifestyle factors

Treatment Evidence

- No intervention/treatment
- Lifestyle modification
- Nonprescription remedies/CAM
- Prescription drugs

Lifestyle Modification

- Avoiding triggers that increase core body temperature (T_c)
- Controlling for environmental temperature
- Physical exercise
- Paced Respiration
- Relaxation-response techniques
- Acupuncture

Prescription options: non-hormonal drugs

- Antidepressants (SSRI)
- Anticonvulsant medications (Gabapentin)
- Hypertensive medication
- Anxiety medications

Nonhormonal Prescription Therapies - Antidepressants

- **Venlafazine** 37.5 or 75 mg /day (Effexor)
- **Paroxetine** 12.5 or 25 mg /day (Paxil)
- **Fluoxetine** 10 or 20 mg / day (Prozac)
- All have been shown to be more effective than placebo for hot flashes in RCT, primary studies in women with hx breast cancer receiving Tamoxifen
- Effect is rapid, generally in 1-2 weeks

Carroll, D. 2006, American Family Physician

Nonhormonal Prescription Therapies - Antidepressants

- Venlafaxine (Effexor) 229 women with at least 14 hot flashes week, randomized to one of three doses
 - 37.5 mg 37% reduction
 - 75 mg 60% reduction
 - 150 mg 60% reduction
 - Placebo 27% reduction

Loprinzi CL Lancet, 2000

Nonhormonal Prescription Therapies - Antidepressants

- Side Effects – Antidepressants
 - Dry mouth
 - Decreased appetite
 - Somnolence
 - Dizziness
 - Constipation
 - Sexual dysfunction
 - Gastrointestinal

Nonhormonal Prescription Therapies - Antidepressants

■ Drug Interactions

- Venlafaxine has dose related HTN
- Paroxetine/Fluoxetine may interfere with breakdown of tamoxifen *
- Contraindication with MAO inhibitors
- Paroxetine/Fluoxetine contraindicated with warfarin

*Hickey, C. et al, 2008, Annals of Oncology; 19

Nonhormonal Prescription Therapies – Other Alternatives

- Gabapentin (300 mg/day-300 mg 3 x day)
 - 900 mg/d reduced hot flashes 45-50% *
 - Somnolence, fatigue, dizziness, rash, palpitations, edema, less sexual dysfunction, no contraindications with other meds**
- *Loprinzi, C. et al, Journal of Clinical Oncology, 2009; 17
- **Hickey, M, et al, Annals of Oncology, 2008; 19

Nonhormonal Prescription Therapies – Other Alternatives

- Clonidine (0.05-0.1 mg /2x/day or 0.1 mg patch)
 - Dry mouth, insomnia, drowsiness, hypotension
- Bellegral (phenobarbital, ergotamine, belladonna).

Recommendations for Hot Flashes with Breast Cancer

- Begin with lifestyle management
 - Environmental manipulations, exercise, weight loss, stress management, relaxation
- Consider non-prescription remedies
 - OTC supplements/herbal
- Consider prescription meds
 - Antidepressants
 - Gabapentin
 - Clonidine (less desirable side effect profile)

Sexuality With Menopause

- Changing hormone levels
 - Vaginal changes
 - Reduction in production/volume vaginal lubrication
 - Hot flashes/night sweats, sleep problems, fatigue
- Sexuality does change with age
 - Health issues
- Interpersonal factors
 - Relationship issues/family stressors
 - Partner availability/health
- Psychological
 - Body image
 - Expectations due to prior sexual functioning

Potential Causes Vulvovaginal Symptoms in Menopausal Women

- Hypoestrogenic state
 - Menopause/Premature ovarian failure
- Endocrine Therapies
 - Estrogen agonists/antagonists (SERMs)
 - Aromatase inhibitors
- Surgically-induced menopause
- Infections
- Cancer Treatments (surgery, pelvic radiation, chemotherapy, endocrine therapy)
- Trauma, foreign body, allergic reactions, inflammatory conditions, infections

Vulvovaginal Atrophy (VVA)

- Vaginal Dryness
- Pain with intercourse/vaginal penetration
- Irritation
- Pain with urination
- Bleeding
- Can be associated with recurrent bladder and kidney infections

Vaginal Health Tips

- If you have **PAIN** – **STOP**
- Water-based lubricant for sex
- Oil based lubricants for genital moisturizing *
- Vitamin E vaginal suppositories/capsules *
- Avoid douching, scented soaps, bubble baths
- Use of dilators for vaginal stretching
- Estrogen products for peri/post menopausal dryness
 - Creams
 - Estring

* Not compatible with condoms

Vaginal Moisturizers/Lubricants

■ Moisturizers

- Replens
- KY LiquiBeads
- Vitamin E oil/suppositories
- Yes Products (oil/water based)
- Sylk

■ Lubricants

- Fem Glide (Slippery Stuff)
- Astroglide
- Liquid Silk
- Good Clean Love

Vaginal Dryness: Local Estrogen

- Estrin (7.5 ug estradiol/day)
- VagiFem vaginal tablet (25/10 ug estradiol)
 - Increased circulating estradiol with AI –avoid*
- CEE or Estradiol vaginal cream
 - Systemic absorption – avoided in ER +BRCA tx
- Estriol vaginal cream

*Kendall, A, et al. 2006, Ann Oncol, 17(4)

Sexuality - Specific Suggestions

- Talk about it
- Non sexual touching
- Sexual conversation
- Expanding sexual pleasure
- Create an erotic environment in the bedroom
- Make it a priority to spend time together
- Shift in attitude from goal directed sexual experience to non-goal directed

Where to obtain more help?

- Self help books
- Web Sites
- Sex Therapist
 - Usually 6-8 sessions are enough
- Health Care Providers

Resources

■ Menopause

- Menopause Naturally. Sadja Greenwood, MD
- Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause. Boston Collective
- www.menopause.org (NAMS)
- www.healthywomen.org (National Women's Health Resource)
- www.shef.ac.uk/FRAX/tool.jsp (WHO Fracture Risk)

■ Breast Cancer

- www.breastcancer.org
- www.acscsn.org

Resources

■ Sexuality

- Getting the Sex You Want. Sandra Leiblum, Judith Sachs
- Better Than I Expected. Sex after 60. Joan Price
- Taking Sexy Back. Jean Campell
- Women, Cancer, Sex. Anne Katz
- [www.twshf](http://www.twshf.org) (Women's Sexual Health Foundation)

■ Products

- www.goodvibes.com
- www.goodcleanlove.com
- www.yesyesyes.com