Women’s expectations and experiences of hormone treatment for sexual dysfunction

This study, published on line by the Journal Climacteric in July 2014, was undertaken as part of the research of Ms Ensieh Fooladi for her PhD, with Professors Susan Davis, Robin Bell and Dr Andrea Whittaker.

The study aim was to explore why women might seek treatment for their sexual problems as well as their expectations of treatment, and whether their expectations were met. Women with the complaint of sexual difficulties, seeing a specialist endocrinologist for the first time were invited to take part in an in-depth interview on the same day as, but prior to, their medical consultation. Follow-up phone interviews then took place 3-4 months later.

Seventeen women, aged 26-70 years, participated in the study. Four major themes emerged from the women’s narrative stories of their experiences and expectations.

These included:
1. personal psychological distress associated with the sexual problems they were experiencing;
2. concern about the adverse effect of their sexual problem on the relationship with their sexual partner;
3. a belief in a relationship between their sexual problem and ‘hormone deficiency’; and
4. an expectation that they would be offered a treatment, which would result in positive physical and sexual changes.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is holding a public forum and Scientific Workshop on the issue of Female Sexual Dysfunction (FSD) and treatment options at the end of October. This is in response to the criticisms of the FDA having a gender bias in terms of approving treatments for sexual dysfunction. The FDA has approved 26 therapies for men and none for women.

The objective of the event is for the community to state their concerns/perspectives and to discuss current approaches to the treatment of FSD.

Several issues have blocked approvals for treatments of FSD. These include lack of recognition of the personal distress FSD causes women, lack of agreement as to what to measure when assessing the effectiveness of treatment for FSD, lack of agreement as to what...
Get involved in Research

A New Study for Women Taking Tamoxifen to Treat Breast Cancer

Women taking tamoxifen as part of their breast cancer treatment program are invited to participate in this study.

Tamoxifen is a highly effective medication used to treat women with hormone sensitive breast cancer – it prevents recurrence and prolongs survival. However, it promotes uterine cell growth, and when used for many years, has been associated with an increased rate of uterine cancer.

We have been funded by the NHMRC to conduct a study to assess whether the medication metformin will prevent uterine cancer in women taking tamoxifen.

We are seeking women who are taking tamoxifen therapy, are postmenopausal and under the age of 75 to participate in our study.

Each woman joining the study will have an ultrasound to look at her uterus and ovaries performed by an expert gynaecologist. Any woman found to have an abnormally thickened uterine lining will be investigated further. Women will then be randomised to take metformin or placebo tablets twice a day for 12 months, after which they will again have an ultrasound, and if necessary, a biopsy – at no cost to them.

Women who participate in the study will benefit by having monitoring of their uterine lining while on tamoxifen, which is not part of standard care, and insulin/glucose testing.

Participants will be seen at the Women’s Health Research Program at the Alfred Centre (Alfred Hospital) Melbourne, but will stay under the care of their own breast cancer doctors through the study, and continue on their own treatment plan. We have streamlined the study to minimise demands on participants.

If you wish to take part in the study you can contact us by email: med-pecam@monash.edu or phone 03 9903 0833 or 03 9903 0836.

Women’s Health Research Program

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Information provided might not be relevant to a particular person’s circumstances and should always be discussed with that person’s own healthcare provider.