

A-18 Women's attitude towards menopause and hormone replacement therapy

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120 randomly selected women who were above 40 years and menopausal were recruited for the study, from 1st April 1996 to 30th April 1997. These women presented with various gynaecological problems such as prolapse, vaginal discharge, backache and urinary symptoms. They were interviewed by using a pretested questionnaire.

The study was carried out in the Out Patient Department of the Professorial Gynaecology Unit attached to De Soysa Hospital for Women, Colombo.

The study sample included women with surgical menopause 22 (18%) and natural menopause 98 (82%).

38 women (32%) had heard of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). 22 women (18%) heard about HRT from their physician. Women who got information about HRT from their physician 18 (82%) were satisfied with the information given. Only 12 (10%) were currently using HRT and another 10 (8%) had done so in the past. The reasons for using HRT were surgical menopause 17 (78%), Climacteric symptoms 2 (9%), doctors recommendation 1 (4%), prevention of ischaemic heart disease and/or Osteoporosis (None) and not specified 2 (9%). The major reason given for not starting HRT was an absence of climacteric symptoms 53 (55%), others were worried that the treatment could cause cancer 3 (3%), unwillingness to use drugs 4 (4%) and having periods again 2 (2%) and fear of side effects 4 (4%). Women who answered the question on the importance of HRT (38), 40% felt it was very or moderately important and 58% had no opinion. 58% felt that menopause was a neutral or natural phenomenon. 22% felt it was a positive juncture in their lives. Only 22% looked at it negatively while 8% had no opinion. 18% got information about HRT from their physician and 14% from media and the rest from friends and family.

Most of the study population were not using HRT. All menopausal women should be educated about HRT by their physicians, family health workers, to reduce morbidity related to menopause.