

# Menopause: Mind, Body, Spirit



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# Menopause

- A very brief history...





# Menopause

- Henry Halford, 1813
- Wrote about...”that period of life at which the vital forces begin to decline, commencing from about 45 until 60 years of age.”
- “The patient sometimes suspects...a fever and might also experience head and chest pains, vertigo, rheumatic pains, swollen legs and sluggish bowels...”



# Menopause

## ■ Halford, cont.

- “...above all, anxiety of mind and sorrow have laid the surest foundation for the malady.”
- “I should observe that though this climacteric disease is sometimes equally remarkable in women as in men, yet most certainly I have not noticed it so frequently, nor so well characterized in females.”
- “Wondered whether it was the prospect of death that...” inflicted the wound in the patient’s peace of mind.”



# Menopause

- Prior to 19<sup>th</sup> century, not really recognized
  - Life expectancy was about 50 years
  - Onset of menopause about 51 years
- Gardanne, 1821
  - French physician who coined term “menopause”
  - Meant to call attention to this transition of life in women
  - Prior to this, and for much of early 19<sup>th</sup> century, little to distinguish this condition between men and women



# Experiencing Menopause

- A biocultural event?
  - In the West, largely medicalized
  - Viewed as pathology
    - Decreasing levels of estrogen
    - HRT
  - Time of transition of mind, body, spirit
    - Newer thinking
    - Empowering



# Experiencing Menopause

## ■ “Local Biologies”

- Menopause experienced differently by different cultures
  - No term for hot flashes in Japanese
  - Experience of Mayan women, East Indian, African



# Experiencing Menopause

- Influenced by many variables
  - Cultural expectations, views of life transitions, diet, pregnancies, lifestyle, etc.



# Menopause – Symptom Management

- Hot Flashes
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Restless Legs
- GI Distress
- Joint Pain
- Fatigue
- Bone loss



# Menopause – Symptom Management

- Diet
- Herbas
- Supplements
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Mind-Body
- Acupuncture
- Osteopathy, etc.



# Hot Flash Triggers

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Hot/spicy foods
- Smoking
- Stress
- Hot drinks
- Warm environment



# Diet

- Low Inflammation Diet
  - “Inflammation-Free Diet Plan”
    - Reduce cardiac, cancer, autoimmune risk
  - Low Glycemic Foods
  - Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
  - Hormone-free meat and poultry



# Diet – What’s the deal with soy?

## ■ Soy

- Whole soy foods seem okay, maybe beneficial
  - Isoflavones
- Tofu, miso, seitan, tempeh, edamame
- Avoid isolated soy supplements
- Soy milk
  - Seems okay, controversial on Web



# Symptom Management – Diet

## ■ Flax

- Lignans – plant-derived compounds
- Small study, 2007
  - 2 tbsp. Ground flax seed added to cereal, yogurt, juice, fruit
  - 2x/day for six weeks
- Decreased hot flash frequency by 50%

## ■ 7-HMR Lignans from Norwegian Spruce Tree

- May be another beneficial source of lignans



# Symptom Management - Diet

## ■ Phytoestrogens

- Appear to be protective
  - Includes lignans, isoflavones
- Soy, flax, legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, alfalfa, red clover, fennel, berries, ginseng, pomegranate



# Diet

- Healthy protein sources
- Good fats
  - Minimize saturated fats
  - Avoid trans fats
- Complex carbohydrates
- Avoid: hormones, antibiotics, pesticides, dyes, preservatives



# Symptom Management - Herbals

- Black Cohosh
  - Remfemin
  - Most popular for hot flashes
  - Non-estrogenic
  - Safe in patients with breast cancer
  - Start with 40mg daily
    - Standardized extract  
2.5% triterpene glycosides
  - Potential for liver toxicity



# Symptom Management - Herbals

■ Red Clover

■ Chastetree Berry



# Symptom Management - Herbals

## ■ Dong Quai

- Chinese herb traditionally used for hot flashes
- Poor research support for effectiveness
- More effective as part of overall regimen of herbs?

## ■ Valerian

- Sedative effect
- Insomnia
- Generally safe

## ■ Chamomile

- Calming
- Soothes GI tract



# Symptom Management - Herbas

## ■ Tea

- Black, oolong, green, white, red
- Rich source of polyphenols
- General health



# Symptom Management - Supplements

- Omega 3 Fatty Acids
  - Fish oils
  - Flax
  - Salba
  - Anti-inflammatory
  - Cardioprotective



# Symptom Management - Supplements

- Calcium

- Magnesium

- Slo-mag
- Restless leg syndrome

- Micronutrients

- Boron
- Bone Up, Bone Restore

- Vitamin D3

- Bone health, immune function, cancer prevention, blood sugar control, mood



# Symptom Management - Supplements

## ■ Probiotics

- GI Distress
- Antiinflammatory

## ■ Pancreatic enzymes

- Wobenzyme

## ■ Aloe Juice

## ■ L-Theanine

- Amino acid in green tea
- Mild sedative
- Good alternative for anxiety



# Symptom Management - Supplements

## ■ B Vitamins

- Depleted in stress
  - Stress and anxiety linked to more intense hot flashes
- Important for neurologic function, memory, CV risk, energy
- Folate, B12, B6
  - Most important

## ■ Rhodiola rosea

- Extract
- Beneficial for fatigue

## ■ Amino Acids

- Energy, cell metabolism, immune function



# Meditation

- Regular meditative practice prior to perimenopause
  - Significantly less severe symptoms
  - Lower doses of medication
  - Improve anxiety, depression
  - Spirituality



# Meditation

- Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction
  - Programs available in DE and greater Philadelphia
  - Jon Kabbat-Zinn, PhD
- Breath work, Pranayama
  - Art of Living Foundation
- Hypnotherapy
  - Practitioners in DE



# Mind-Body Therapies

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Qi Gong
- Tai Chi
  - Seem to reduce frequency and severity of hot flashes
  - Improved sleep
  - Unites mind/body
  - Improved mood
  - Weight bearing exercise
  - Benefits joint
  - Meant for longevity



# Exercise

- Decreases severity and frequency of hot flashes
- Heart health, bone health, brain health, circulation, cholesterol levels, mood
  - All benefit
  - BMI >25 does best, BMI < 30 most symptoms

# Spirituality



- Develop a spiritual practice
- Practice gratitude
- Seek balance
- Have compassion toward yourself and others