Information for patients

NHS
Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

ADHD and the Menopause

Hormonal fluctuations leading up to and during the menopause can have a marked impact on your ADHD symptoms.

Your hormones and ADHD

When you go through menopause, your oestrogen levels decline. This can, in turn, impact the neurotransmitters in your brain required for attention, regulating your emotions, organisational skills, and memory. Women without ADHD may experience this, but for women with a diagnosis, the peri/menopause can make your symptoms more severe, and the need for specialised treatment more likely.

Reduced oestrogen levels during the menopause also include a drop in dopamine levels, which are already lower in women with ADHD.

As you go through menopause, you may find that you have more difficulties than usual, or that symptoms you experienced before get slightly worse.

You may also experience low mood or increased anxiety during and after this transition.

You might feel that life gets a bit harder at this time but with the right support and an understanding of how your hormones impact your ADHD, you should be able to manage your symptoms more effectively.

Web additudemag.com/add-and-menopause-how-hormones-affect-adhd-symptoms/

Treatment options

Medications and HRT

Generally, there is no evidence to suggest that women in menopause should be treated differently with respect to pharmacological treatments for ADHD. Atomoxetine (a SNRI) has proven useful, as have Dexamphetamines and Lisdexamfetamine. The latter has been shown to improve menopausal women's memory, reasoning, multi-tasking, planning, and problem-solving.

If you were diagnosed at a younger age and already take stimulant medication for ADHD, an increase in dose may be offered to offset the effects of your changing hormone levels.

If you would rather not take additional stimulants, your doctor can prescribe Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) to increase your oestrogen levels.

As is often the case with ADHD, combined therapy is regarded as most helpful.

This may include medication and/or hormone replacement, and psychological therapies.

Other options and recommendations

- Make sure to eat a wholesome, nutritious, and well-balanced diet.
- Get regular exercise. This should improve cognitive symptoms, enhance your self-esteem, and improve the quality of your sleep, all of which are affected during the menopause.
- Stress-reduction techniques such as mindfulness (e.g., meditation) are also recommended for easing symptoms.

Psychological therapies

There are currently no programmes designed specifically for women with ADHD who are also going through the menopause. However, treatment for ADHD more generally should help.

CBT can help you enhance self-control and self-esteem, both of which are affected during the transition to menopause.

Tracking your symptoms

It is recommended that you purposefully track any changes in symptoms so that healthcare professionals can provide you with appropriate support according to your individual needs. If possible, seek out a professional for women's health or someone who has a sound knowledge of how ADHD and/or hormones affect women in mid-life.

Keep an eye on your symptoms and note down any changes.

You might find it helpful to keep a diary or record of symptoms – what they are, when they happen and how significant the change feels.

Psychoeducation

Although research on the link between ADHD and the peri/menopause is limited, try to educate yourself as much as you can about the effects of hormone fluctuations on your ADHD or any other mood-related issues.

Given that you are also in a middle to older age group, this may help reassure you that your symptoms are a likely result of changes in your hormone levels rather than something more severe or degenerative (e.g., Dementia).

Web chesapeakeadd.com/home/education-and-training/articles/hormones-and-adhd-in-women/