INFORM Hub Annual Event

Managing Menopause Symptoms Breakout Session Recap

Date: 24th June 2025

Venue: University of Reading, Whiteknights Campus

Discussion Facilitator: Dr Giorgia Perri (University of Newcastle) & Dr Andrea Bertocco (Herbalife)

The recent session on managing menopause provided comprehensive insights into the multifaceted nature of menopause symptoms, emphasising the importance of holistic management approaches. The session began with an engaging exercise from GenM, which revealed 48 symptoms associated with menopause, highlighting the broad spectrum beyond commonly recognised issues such as hot flashes, cardiovascular risks, and osteoporosis. This exercise underscored the necessity for increased awareness and understanding of the interconnected symptoms women experience during menopause. (https://gen-m.com/signs/).

Key Discussion Points

Awareness and Context

- Menopause symptoms are diverse and interconnected, requiring a holistic approach to management.
- Understanding the broad range of symptoms can aid in better diagnosis and treatment strategies.

Worries and Concerns

- Symptom interdependence, such as how poor sleep impacts appetite, insulin sensitivity, and cognitive health.
- The natural decline of hormones is inevitable; the goal is to support women through this transition without pathologising it.
- Social media's role in increasing awareness must be balanced to prevent demonisation of menopause.

- Workplace policies and societal norms influence symptom perception and management.
- Personalised hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is essential due to variability in tolerability and effectiveness.

Real-World Observations

- Women tend to prioritise immediate symptoms over long-term health risks, such as osteoporosis or cardiovascular disease.
- Visible changes and weight gain cause significant distress, often compounded by ineffective or unvalidated products.
- Early education and prevention are crucial, especially addressing perimenopause, which is often underrecognized.

Research Gaps and Future Directions

- Need for scientific validation of menopause-related products and interventions.
- Understanding why symptom severity varies among women, considering factors like genetics, lifestyle, and microbiome.
- Development of biomarkers and symptom tracking tools, including longitudinal hormone monitoring and subjective assessments.
- Exploration of genetic links and the role of the gut microbiome in menopause symptoms.
- Designing studies that incorporate patient involvement and address recruitment challenges.

Holistic Research and Collaborations

- Personalised symptom management based on mechanistic understanding.
- Multidisciplinary collaborations involving technology companies, healthcare professionals, and policymakers.
- Engagement with credible influencers and policy initiatives to raise awareness and improve intervention strategies.

Foreseeable Challenges and Next Steps

- Difficulty in distinguishing menopausal symptoms from other causes, complicating recruitment and diagnosis.
- Developing reliable symptom monitoring tools and predictive models using machine learning.
- Adopting a comprehensive approach that includes microbiome support, lifestyle modifications, and stress management.

The group concluded, managing menopause effectively requires a nuanced understanding of its complex symptomatology, personalised treatment strategies, and collaborative efforts across disciplines. Emphasising education and holistic care can improve the quality of life for women navigating this natural transition.