

Middle-aged women: The diagnosis of Health and Risks

por

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Health

“Is a condition of **physical, mental and social** wellbeing and not only the absence of disease”

WHO

**The assessment of *health*
is far more difficult than
the diagnosis of *disease*.**

Preventive Medicine

“The branch of medical science concerned with the prevention of diseases, with promotion of physical and mental health through study of aetiology and epidemiology of disease processes”

Our main goal, as attending physicians of postmenopausal women, is the **maintenance of their health** and the **primary and secondary prevention** of the diseases, which are more prevalent after age 50.

Neves-e-Castro M. When hormone replacement therapy is not possible. The Management of the Menopause. The Millennium Review, Parthenon 2000:91-102.

Objectives

Good quality of life:

- a) maintain and improve Health
- b) prevent diseases

White woman's risk of death
between the ages of 50 and 94 are:

31.0% from heart disease

2.8% from breast cancer

2.8% from hip fracture

Brinton LA, Schairer C. N Engl J Med. 1997;336:1769-1775

**A menopausal woman is
a middle-aged woman.**

As a menopausal woman:

She is hypoestrogenic and will suffer, at various levels, from its consequences.

As a middle-aged woman:

She will suffer from the process of natural aging, both from a biological and a psychological perspective.

Symptoms of the pre and postmenopause

- hormone related
- age related

Ageing and lack of estrogens ...

- insulin resistance
- increase in blood pressure
- changes in lipid metabolism
- decrease in immune function
- increase in stored fat

Risk factors after menopause

Related to:

- hormones
- age
- life style
- nutrition
- exercise

Diseases with higher incidence after menopause

- CV (*dyslipidemias*)
- Bone (*osteopenia, osteoporosis*)
- CNS (*brain dysfunctions and degenerations*)

Risks for Breast Cancer

- Family history
- Early menarche
- Late menopause
- Nulliparity
- First child after age 35
- Alcohol abuse
- Lack of exercise
- Diet poor in fruits and vegetables

Cancer, Body Weight and Risks

For Breast Cancer

- BMI < 25 (under HT) or BMI > 25
- Weight (> 60 kg) and Age (> 50 years)

For CVD

- Ratio girdle/hip > 0.8

Risks for CVD

- High BP
- High total cholesterol
- High LDL
- Low HDL
- High tryglicerides
- C reactive protein +

Tests

Initial and Periodical

Blood Chemistry

- **Blood pressure**
- **Blood lipids**
- **C-Reactive Protein**
- **Liver function**
- **Insulin/glucose (fasting)**
- **etc**

Which are the markers of good health?

- 1 - fasting insulin levels less than 10 uU/mL**
- 2 - fasting glucose / insulin ratio (mg/dl:uU/mL) greater than 4.5**
- 3 - glycosylated hemoglobin less than 5 %**
- 4 - fasting triglycerides less than 140 mg/dL**
- 5 - low total cholesterol (less than 200 mg/dL)**
- 6- LDL less than 130 mg/dL and HLD greater than 50 mg/dL**

Which are the markers of good health?

- 7 - triglycerides / HDL ratio less than 2**
- 8 - total cholesterol / HDL ratio less than 4.5**
- 9 - BMI (body mass index) 20-25 Kg/m²**
- 10 - body fat less than 22 %**
- 11 - blood pressure: diastolic less than 90 mm Hg and systolic less than 140 mm Hg**
- 12 - bone mineral density: T above - 1.0 SD**

Physical and Imageing

- BMI (% fat)
- Girdle/Hip
- Stools (occult blood)
- Pap Smear
- Mammography
- DPX ??
- U.S. endovaginal?

Life Style

- **Nutrition**
- **Exercise**
- **Tobacco**
- **Alcohol**
- **Libido**

The support of good health and longevity

- **Aerobic exercise**
- **Rational nutrition**
- **Reduced smoking**
- **Reduced alcohol consumption**
- **Mental occupation**
- **Pharmacologic interventions**

Reducing Risks to Health

the subject of the

WHO World Health Report 2002

Leading 10 selected risk factors as percentage causes of disease burden measured in DALYs

Developed countries	
Tobacco	12.2%
Blood pressure	10.9%
Alcohol	9.2%
Cholesterol	7.6%
Overweight	7.4%
Low fruit and vegetable intake	3.9%
Physical inactivity	3.3%
Illicit drugs	1.8%
Unsafe sex	0.8%
Iron deficiency	0.7%

Moderate exercise cuts breast cancer biomarkers in postmenopausal women

- *Increased physical activity* significantly reduces serum estrogens in postmenopausal women and thus *may reduce the risk of breast cancer*

Physical Exercise Activities and Risk of Breast Cancer

- 2 to 4 hours / week RR = 0.8
- > than 4 hours / week RR = 0.4

Practical Guidelines (1)

- Start a Mediterranean diet
- Start a program of physical fitness, and exercise as much as possible
- Keep mentally active
- Reformulate the life-style

Practical Guidelines (2)

-Take the following nutrients (essential):

1 - Vitamin A	4.000 IU/d
2 - Vitamin B6	5-10 mg/d
3 - Vitamin C	500-1000 mg/d
4 - Vitamin D	400-800 IU/d

Practical Guidelines (3)

-Take the following nutrients (essential):

5 - Vitamin E	200-400 IU/d
6 - Folic acid	0.5-1.0 mg/d
7 - Calcium (ion)	500-1000 mg/d
8 - Magnesium	250-400 mg/d
9 - β -carotene	5000 IU/d

Practical Guidelines (4)

- For the prevention of atherosclerosis (advisable):
 - 1 - lovastatin or simvastatin (for primary and secondary prevention, respectively)
 - 2 - aspirin (50-100 mg/d)
 - 3 - angiotension converting enzyme inhibitors

British recommendations on prevention of coronary heart disease in clinical practice:

BMJ 2002;230:705-708

Lifestyle targets for all patients

- . **Stop smoking**
- . **Make healthier food choices**
- . **Aerobic exercise**
- . **Moderate alcohol consumption**

BMJ 2002;320:705-708

The *Nurses Health Study* has shown that between 1980 and 1994 there was a **31% reduction in CHD**. Better nutrition, smoking cessation and hormonal treatments in the menopause were responsible for the **18%, 13 % and 9%** reduction, respectively.

Hu FB, Grodstein F et al. Trends in the Incidence of Coronary Heart Disease and Changes in Diet and Lifestyle in Women. *NEJM* 2000;343:530-537.

Nurses's Health Study (NEJM, 2000)

from 1980 to 1994 CHD ↓ 31%

↓ Smoking	↓ 13%
↑ Obesity	↑ 8%
↑ THS	↓ 9%
↑ Better nutrition	↓ 16%

“It appears that **half of the benefits** in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases **are not hormone related**”!

Mosca L, Grundy SM, Judelson D, et al. Circulation 1999;99:2480-4

Hormone Replacement Therapy concept

To **add** hormones that should physiologically be present at any time in life

PostMenopause Hormonal Treatments (PMHT)

They are not
substitutive

They are important for:

- symptom relief
- disease prevention (primary and secondary)

**The important issue, after all,
is not HRT**

**What is important is the *best possible approach* to
preventive medicine in a
middle-aged woman**

This discussion is important because there is a tendency to consider that there is nothing but estrogens to offer to a postmenopausal woman, and that such treatments are obligatory for every woman and for very long time.

This is wrong !

HRT

is a misnomer !

Gynaecology:

What is it?

Gynaecology = *gynaeco* +
logos

i.e.

the Science or the Study of the
Woman, as a whole .

However, today

Gynaecology = *gynaeco-*
pathology

i.e.

the study and treatment of the
diseases of women

Gynaecology:

Is today more concerned with the organic pathology of women, without much consideration of their psychic dimension ,and even less with their physical and mental health.

A modern gynecologist must ...

know how to identify risk factors and to modify them in order to prevent diseases.

Modern gynaecologists :

must be:

- “People”
- Physicians
- *and ... Specialists*

As physicians - gynaecologists:

Our mission is:

- 1. To preserve and to promote the physical and mental health of women.**
- 2. To identify and to modify the risk factors that may lead to diseases.**
- 3. To diagnose and to treat their diseases.**

An attending gynecologist must never overlook that his/her primary role is to promote health and to prevent diseases, other than being able only to diagnose and treat the illnesses of mature women.

Never forget your advise about:

- **Aerobic exercise**
- **Rational nutrition**
- **Reduced smoking**
- **Reduced Alchool consumption**
- **Develop Mental ocupations**
- **Pharmacologic interventions**

. What **must** we learn ?

We must learn...

How to practice

GOOD

MEDICINE!