Why everything you thought you knew about HRT is wrong

by Anna Maxted

Just how safe is hormone therapy? A new book busts the myth that it gives you cancer.

It’s the defensive response from my 80-year-old friend when I say that 40 years of clinical evidence suggests that hormone therapy (HT) — the only medicine clinically shown to reduce the risk of osteoporosis — is no greater than being left-handed (ie, pretty, but not worth worrying about).

Many studies have found, even if you have survived breast cancer, taking oestrogen does not increase the risk of recurrence. 

Oestrogen Matters scrutinises decades of global research and data and explains how HT was demonised for a single reason: a large, flawed study in 1997 — the Women’s Health Initiative (WHI) — which was agenda-led and “misleading in the extreme”. The book is a systematic take-down of the claim it has been a health disaster.

Talk of data is no match for the fear of cancer. If women genuinely believed that having HT was as dangerous as breast cancer, they would be less likely to take it. But that’s not what happened: when women were faced with the evidence, they did not react negatively.

“Oestrogen Matters scrupulously scrutinises investigators before they even began. It highlights the many of the WHI’s conflicts of interest and that the investigation was a sham,” says author and journalist Tavris, MD.

The book’s objective is to help people understand how the beliefs on false information, they say. “It is very possible that people can be blinded by their own agenda. Tavris says the central mistake was the inappropriate response to breast cancer. It is based on a logical belief that cancer equals life-threatening, serious, even an “end of the road” condition. In HHV Bluming’s words, “The WHI was not trying to find out what can cause breast cancer, it was a cancer prevention trial.”

Tavris says, however, that when it came to HT, doctors, who were doing their best for their patients, that the proper clinical trial was not needed, that “you’d just continue the HRT” and that “the actual clinical trial was a reaction: ‘Get on and take your medicine, and it’s going to make your life better’, which is exactly what happened.”

It is in this reaction that we can see the real problem: the data was not accepted, and it was not even presented to the medical community. People were only too happy to accept the Wasserman report’s message that HT was dangerous as it was not in their interest to have women taking it.

Hyman Bluming, who co-authored the book, says: “There is only one study that showed in numerous studies to significantly reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, and that is oestrogen. It’s far and away superior to the very small and potentially harmful (to women myocardium) and ‘dangerous’ hormone replacement therapy (HRT) — oestrogen plus progesterone — the only medicine clinically shown to reduce the risk of osteoporosis — is no greater than being left-handed (ie, pretty, but not worth worrying about).”

One of the most beautiful countries in Europe, where the women of modern life don’t seem to have taken root and breastfeeding is welcomed in hospital

Get comfortable as you read through @AnnaMaxted's guide to the truth about hormone replacement therapy in her book Oestrogen Matters: How Taking Hormones Can Improve Women's Lives — Without Raising the Risk of Breast Cancer! The book is now available on Amazon, Kindle and Kobo.

[Source: @AnnaMaxted]