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More than half of women feel negative about their experience of the menopause

New survey highlights impact of the menopause on every aspect of women's lives in the UK

London, 18 October 2017: Three quarters of women say that the menopause caused them to change their life and over half say it had a negative impact on their lives*. Those are the headlines from a recent survey conducted by the British Menopause Society (BMS), released today to mark World Menopause Day. The findings reveal the need for greater support for women experiencing the menopause across the UK.

Almost half said they had hot flushes (46%), night sweats (37%) and low levels of energy (37%).¹ Despite this, a third of the women surveyed who were experiencing or who have experienced the menopause, hadn't tried anything to reduce or prevent their symptoms.¹

The impact of this was revealed as having negative effects on most aspects of the women's lives, with the online survey highlighting the following:

- Over half (51%) of women said that the menopause had affected their sex lives, with around 40% saying that they just didn't feel as sexy since experiencing the menopause.¹
- Over a quarter of women (26%) said that they felt less outgoing in social situations and felt more isolated (23%). Over a third (34%) said that they were less active since experiencing the menopause and a further third (32%) said they no longer felt like good company.¹
- Furthermore, almost half (45%) of women, whose menopause had a strong impact on their lives, felt their menopause symptoms have had a negative impact on their work.¹

The survey also revealed that the menopause remains a 'taboo' subject in the UK and something women and men don't always feel comfortable talking about. Nearly half of women (47%) surveyed who are in employment and who needed to take a day off because of the menopause said they wouldn't feel comfortable disclosing the real reason to their employer or colleagues.¹ At home, 38% of partners surveyed said they feel helpless when it comes to supporting their partners through the menopause and a third said they often end up having arguments because they don't understand what their partners are going through.¹

Kathy Abernethy, Chairman, British Menopause Society said:

"Despite the average female life expectancy in the UK being 83 years, and many women living in the post-menopausal phase for half to one-third of their lives, the findings of the survey suggest that there are still many women who are choosing to go through the menopause without seeking support or treatment even when they are experiencing symptoms that are affecting all aspects of their lives, including their relationships.

"Sadly, many women are unaware of the impact their symptoms can have on their overall health and that small lifestyle and dietary changes can help improve their quality of life. Many with severe symptoms are also often confused about the benefits and risks of treatment options.

“We believe women need greater support and information to be able to cope with the impact of the menopause, and this includes work, especially at a time when everyone, men and women included, are living longer. This is why the British Menopause Society has developed a range of resources and services to help women better understand their menopause symptoms and advice and treatments available.”

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published a new guideline on the *menopause diagnosis and management* in November 2015.² The guidance recommended that health care professionals should adopt an individualised approach at all stages of diagnosis, investigation and management of the menopause.² The guideline covered the treatment of symptoms with both drug and non-drug treatment options that help with physical and psychological symptoms. It also provided clarity on the benefits and risks of taking HRT (hormone replacement therapy).²

Recognising the concerns of women and their need for support, advice and reassurance, the BMS has published its vision for menopause healthcare in the UK (<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2053369117717207>). The vision sets out the fundamental principles that should underpin menopause care provision for all to ensure that, even at this turbulent time for the NHS, providers and commissioners are held to account and service users can access high quality menopause care as standard. The document has been endorsed by the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the Royal College of Nursing and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The BMS has also published the first medical handbook to be made available post the NICE guidance – *Management of the Menopause 6th edition* – aimed at healthcare professionals. The handbook can be purchased on the BMS website: www.thebms.org.uk/publications/handbook. A lay version of the book, aimed at women and their partners, will be published in September 2018.

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**whose menopause symptoms strongly affected their life*

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the British Menopause Society

The British Menopause Society (BMS) is a specialist society affiliated to the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) and the Faculty of Sexual Reproductive Healthcare. It provides education, information and guidance to healthcare professionals specialising in all aspects of post reproductive health.

For more information, please visit the [British Menopause Society website](#).

For additional resources, these can also be found at:

- <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23> – the NICE website offers a breakdown of the guideline on the diagnosis and management of the menopause
- <https://www.managemymenopause.co.uk/> – for tailored information to suit women's individual needs
- <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/> – for information, online support groups and Menopause Matters – a menopause focused magazine
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/632403/menopause_report.docx – a recent Government report examining the extent to which menopause transition impacts on women's economic participation

Resources are also available on the Women's Health Concern (WHC) website. WHC is the patient arm of the BMS and resources include factsheets covering a wide range of topics from diet, nutrition and lifestyle guidance and top tips for a healthy menopause to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) for Menopausal Symptoms and HRT: benefits and risks. Also on the WHC website is access to a telephone advisory and email advice service (www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice).

Women's Health Concern

Women's Health Concern (WHC), the patient arm of the BMS, provides an independent service to advise, reassure and educate women of all ages about their health, wellbeing and lifestyle concerns. WHC offers unbiased information – by telephone, email, printed fact sheets, online and through symposia, seminars, meetings and workshops, including Living and loving well beyond 40...!

About the survey

On behalf of the BMS, Edelman Intelligence conducted online interviews with 1,000 UK adults (698 women and 302 men) who were aged 45+ and either peri-menopausal, menopausal or post-menopausal or partners of those who are in a relationship with a woman who is either peri-menopausal, menopausal or post-menopausal, nationally representative of the online population in terms of region spread.

What is the menopause?

The menopause refers to that time in every woman's life when her periods stop and her ovaries lose their reproductive function. Usually, this occurs between the ages of 45 and 55. In the UK the average age is 51. In a few exceptional cases women may become menopausal in their 30s, or even younger. This is then known as a premature menopause, or premature ovarian insufficiency.³

For more information on the menopause, please visit the [Women's Health Concern website](#).

References

1. The British Menopause Society: Data on file. British Menopause Society online survey in the UK conducted by Edelman Intelligence on behalf of The British Menopause Society, 2017.
2. National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Menopause: diagnosis and management. Available online: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23> Last accessed: September 2017.
3. Women's Health Concern. The Menopause Factsheet. Available online: <https://www.womens-health-concern.org/help-and-advice/factsheets/menopause/> Last accessed September 2017.