

## International Menopause Society raises awareness of 'brain fog'.

EMBARGO: 00.01 BST Tuesday 18 October 2022 (World Menopause Day)

- *The International Menopause Society has published a 'Brain fog in menopause' White Paper on World Menopause Day.*
- *The global charity has also produced a guide for women to raise awareness of memory and other cognitive difficulties in menopause.*

The International Menopause Society (IMS) has published a new White Paper and guide for women on World Menopause Day to raise awareness of 'brain fog' in menopause and perimenopause.

The *Brain fog in menopause* White Paper, published by world-leading experts in the field of menopausal health, highlights symptoms of memory and other cognitive problems experienced by many women approaching and during menopause.

Menopause 'brain fog' is a group of symptoms which often emerge around the time of the menopause. Symptoms include difficulty remembering words and numbers, disruptions in daily life (misplacing items like keys), trouble concentrating (absent mindedness, losing a train of thought, being more easily distracted), difficulty switching between tasks, forgetting the reason for doing something (like why you came into a room), and forgetting appointments and events.

These difficulties often start when a woman's menstrual cycle becomes irregular, or periods are skipped. Scientists believe that memory complaints may be caused by rising and falling hormones levels, especially estrogen, and by some menopause symptoms, like the hot flushes, sleep disturbances and mood changes. If women have moderate to severe hot flushes, especially at night, they may find their memory is affected.

Most women will go through the menopause between the ages of 45 and 55 and some will become concerned that 'brain fog' symptoms are a sign of dementia. The IMS is keen to stress that while all women reaching this age will go through menopause, most will not develop dementia. Dementia at midlife is very rare unless one has a family history of early-onset Alzheimer's disease.

**Dr Nicole Jaff, co-author of the IMS White Paper, said:**

“Research studies find that a woman’s memory does change at menopause and ‘brain fog’ is common. While this can temporarily affect a woman’s quality of life, the good news is that symptoms are generally mild and resolve post-menopause.

“Women are often concerned that these memory issues are an early symptom of Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, but these conditions are very rare in midlife. Women should be reassured that most memory problems before and during menopause will typically get better over time.”

**Professor Pauline Maki, co-author of the IMS White Paper, added:**

“Midlife women commonly experience changes in their cognitive function as they transition through the menopause and express concern about whether these changes represent the initial stages of a more serious cognitive disorder.

“We want to reassure women that memory changes at menopause should not be confused with dementia and that dementia before age 64 is rare.

“We encourage any women experiencing memory problems, or any other bothersome symptoms during menopause, to contact their healthcare practitioner for support so they can discuss treatments available to help them. Treating the symptoms of menopause can often benefit cognition as well as overall wellbeing.”

The IMS advises women to protect their brain health by taking regular physical exercise and following a healthy diet by cutting down on starchy, fatty, sugary foods, and eating plenty of fruits and vegetables. Stopping smoking, only drinking alcohol in moderation, getting enough sleep and minimizing stress will also reduce the effects of ‘brain fog’.

World Menopause Day, which was established by the IMS, is a worldwide awareness call for women who face health issues when approaching, during and beyond the menopause.

**World Health Organization Director of Sexual & Reproductive Health & Research, Pascale Allotey, said:**

“Awareness of menopause and its multitude of symptoms provides validation and reassurance and signals when help should be sought. It is important that women have accurate information to make choices about their care to ensure their continued health and wellbeing. World Menopause Day is an important reminder that support is available.”

The White Paper is available on the [IMS Website](#) alongside [advice for women](#) who may be suffering from ‘brain fog’ or memory difficulties in mid-life.

**ENDS**

#WorldMenopauseDay

#WorldMenopauseDay2022

## Notes to editors:

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### **About the International Menopause Society**

*A Charitable Incorporated Organisation based in the UK, The International Menopause Society (IMS) brings together the world's leading experts to collaboratively study and share knowledge about all aspects of aging in women. The IMS advocates evidence-based treatment options that optimize midlife women's health and promotes best practice in women's healthcare to healthcare professionals and women across the globe. IMS activities include:*

- *building communities of practice through its membership and Council of Affiliated Societies*
- *publishing original research, reviews, statements and recommendations*
- *holding events to disseminate information including the bi-annual World Congress on Menopause, symposia and workshops*
- *offering online practitioner training resources*
- *the annual World Menopause Day awareness raising campaign*
- [www.imsociety.org](http://www.imsociety.org)

*The International Menopause Society has led on the creation of global resources to improve awareness of the menopause and the lives of middle aged women, including education [YouTube videos in multiple languages](#), [A Practitioner Toolkit for Managing Menopause](#), global consensus statements to advise women and the medical community about effective treatments for menopause symptoms and [IMPART](#)- an international education tool for health practitioners.*

### **About World Menopause Day**

- *World Menopause Day is a worldwide awareness call for women who face health issues when approaching, during and beyond the menopause.*
- *The day, which was established by the IMS, has been observed since 2009 to show support to women across the globe and to recognise the challenges of menopausal symptoms and related conditions.*
- *Visit [the IMS website](#) for more information.*