

Backgrounder: Why not HRT?

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- In 2002, the US Women's Health Initiative (WHI) Study released important information about the long-term (over five years) safety of oestrogen plus progestin combination hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
- In a trial enrolling more than 16,000 postmenopausal women, they reported an increase in the incidence of heart attacks, stroke, clotting events and breast cancer.
- Further information from the WHI study came from an analysis of women 65 years of age and over which found that the incidence of dementia in women receiving HRT was statistically significantly higher than those receiving placebo tablets.
- This information has been strengthened by the publication of the UK Million Women Study (2003) that examined the effect of HRT on breast cancer and confirmed that women on HRT have an observed higher incidence of breast cancer and a tendency to worse outcomes.
- The WHI study also found that HRT users had no quality of life benefit compared to the control women, as measured by 12 aspects including energy, sleep and mood.
- An Australian expert committee convened under the auspices of the Chair of the Australian Drug Evaluation Committee, Professor Martin Tattersall, recommended that combination HRT should not be used for long-term disease prevention, although it may still have a role in short-term treatment of symptoms.
- Women should discuss their treatment of menopause and its symptoms with their health professional.

Source: Jean Hailes Foundation <http://www.jeanhailes.org.au>.

Hotlink: http://www.jeanhailes.org.au/comment/com_aug14_tgs_exp_2003.htm