



NZEMail

June 2012

Newsletter for the NZ Early Menopause Support Group

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Resources for members

Available now:

[NZEM Reference Library](#)

[NZEM Newsletter Archive](#)

Available on request:

[AMS \(AUS\) Newsletters](#)

[Daisy Network \(UK\) Newsletters](#)

[NAMS \(US\) Scientific Reviews](#)



"Now Autumn's fire burns slowly along the woods."

William Allingham, 1824-89

Greetings!

I love autumn. The warm days, the cool nights, the colour; it's a wonderful time of year. While looking for inspiring thoughts to begin our latest newsletter I found some reflections on autumn containing wonderful symbols of richness, maturity and wisdom gained from the spring and summer months. Kind of like what a journey through an early menopause gives you.

Writers described a sense of sorrow, an awareness of the limitations of life that autumn can bring - another gift I feel I've gained from my experience and one that makes me grateful for the blessings in my life.

Some authors described the harvest and thanksgiving - an attitude that can help us to face life's challenges; while others looked ahead to the coming winter - a time of rest for the earth while it waits in expectation of the excitement of spring. Once you've absorbed the blow of the diagnosis, there are riches to be gained on this journey, I promise.

It's been a time of great growth in NZEM (as you'll see below) so, in preparation for the excitement that I know is just round the corner - especially in Melbourne in October! - I'm going to try to take a cue from nature and slow my pace in preparation.

I encourage you to do the same - you could start with a nice cuppa and this newsletter! I hope you enjoy it.

And do keep in touch - I would love to hear your news!

Nicole xx

Contact Us

website:

www.earlymenopause.org.nz

email:

nzem.info@nzord.org.nz

forum:

www.nzordforums.org.nz

Group News

New members

Here is a very brief introduction to some beautiful women, new to NZEM this year. If you identify with any part of their story, they would love to hear from you. Please email me and I'll pass your message on.

Liesl

Singapore. Going through POF and a divorce at the same time. She's in touch with another member in Singapore.

Carrie

Coromandel. Wants another baby, waiting for a formal diagnosis.

Stacey

39, 3 kids, bad symptoms, doctor not great, husband not understanding.

Gill

Early Menopause age 40, now 48 but still looking for answers.

Ad

Diagnosed two years ago age 37, now struggling with heart palpitations.

Dee

Don't know much about her situation, but is looking for support.

Sandra

Auckland. Second marriage no children yet, husband optimistic. One child from previous marriage. Not prepared for menopause at 38.

Michelle

Kerikeri. 7 kids. Bad symptoms. Feeling isolated.

Rasha

Auckland. Married last year, diagnosed this year. Still adjusting to the news. Wants to meet others.

Trina

42 and struggling.

Sam

Auckland. Worried about osteoporosis but confused about HRT.

Arul

Christchurch. Single and new to NZ. Ovary removed 5 years ago at age 40. Not prepared for menopause. Hoping to expand support network.

Catherine

Auckland. Diagnosed 2 years ago, but her results aren't conclusive, so she's still a bit lost, but looking forward to meeting other members.

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phpBB NZORDforums
 Forums for rare disorder support groups, and everyone with an interest in a rare disorder.

Board index - NZ Early Menopause Support Group

NZ Early Menopause Support Group

Topic	Topics	Posts	Last post
General discussion For discussion on general Early Menopause/Premature Ovarian Failure topics, whatever stage you're at Moderator: Nicole	75	249	by Nicole Sat Sep 17, 2011 6:30 pm
Infertility Dealing with infertility as a result of early menopause can be an emotional minefield; share your thoughts and experiences with others here Moderator: Nicole	37	132	by Nicole Sat Sep 17, 2011 6:57 pm
Parenting/Pregnancy Having an early menopause and being a mother (whether naturally or via DE/IVF or adoption) presents many unique challenges; talk to others dealing with similar issues here Moderator: Nicole	4	18	by Nicole Thu Jun 23, 2011 1:28 pm

Latest posts on our forum

- [What you think about your illness can guide the outcome](#)
- [Found my libido...!](#)
- [IVF success not affected by stress](#)

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We're on Twitter

We are now on Twitter! Follow us at [@earlymenonz](#)

Twitter is a great place to find information, connect with others and share news and stories. In our space there's a lot of information on fertility treatments, egg donation and what next? There are also some great blogs written by women who are going through similar journeys. My heartfelt thanks to Liz for setting this up!

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AMS Congress 2012



Thanks to a very generous grant from Fertility Associates, I am delighted to share the good news that I will be in Melbourne to represent NZEM at the 2012 AMS congress!

This year they are holding a half day session dedicated to POF. I will be representing our members, letting the attending doctors know about our support groups, and, of course, bringing you back my notes from the talks. The society is keen for me to be there but I need your help to raise the conference fee.

How you can help

A movie night is a fun way to raise funds, whether it's afternoon tea or a glass of wine at the local art-house cinema or popcorn and ice cream with a blockbuster. If you go on a cheap Tuesday but ask your friends to pay the full price, then you make about \$5 per ticket, and you'll be helping other women find the support you already have. If every member took just two friends

along, we could easily raise the money. Through our friends at NZORD we also have a way to offer tax receipts if required. I've attached a document you can print out and give to your friends and one to manage tax receipt requests.

Here are my picks:

Café de flore – starts June 21

Snow White and the Huntsman – starts June 21

Bel Ami – starts July 26

Hope Springs – starts Aug 23

www.flicks.co.nz

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Paula's story

Paula is a former co-ordinator of this support group and she has posted her early menopause journey on her fantastic new website. She has written beautifully of her experiences. While you're there, do have a look around her site; it is very inspiring!

<http://soulcuisine.co.nz/>

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Natural Hormones

[Dr Rosi Horrocks](#) appeared on Good Morning a few weeks ago discussing the benefits of 'natural' hormones and I wrote in asking for the names of the books she mentioned containing scientific evidence for their efficacy and safety. Not only did she write back to me with the names of the books, but also offered to meet with me as she didn't know our support group existed. I was thrilled and we had a great conversation. She then went a step even further and donated a copy of each book to our library!

This support group is dedicated to giving women access to resources to help them make informed decisions about their treatment regime, so I am delighted to offer these books to you: '*How to achieve healthy aging*' by Dr Neal Rouzier and '*Ageless*' by Suzanne Somers. I haven't read them yet, but I intend to ignore the references to 'ageing' in the hopes of finding a new perspective on this controversial treatment option.

The medical community still say there's not enough evidence to prove 'natural' hormones are safer or better than synthetic hormones, so obviously not all science is equal, but it doesn't hurt to read what is available.

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We Need You!

We always need volunteers to keep this support group running.

There are many areas you could help out in:

- Website maintenance (1 or 2 hours per month)
- Forum chat (1 or 2 hours per month)
- Quarterly newsletters - ad hoc contributions gratefully received
- Research round-up (ad hoc)
- Contact with membership - especially newbies (1 or 2 hours per month)
- Local support co-ordination (1 or 2 hours per month per area)
- Publicity via flyers/specialists/media (1 or 2 hours per month per area)
- Money to donate towards the printing of flyers (or I can send you the PDF and you can get them printed yourself).

I've been amazed how my involvement in this support group has helped me make sense of my own pain by giving back to others. Let me know which area you'd like to be involved in!

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Getting together

Regions

Auckland – mid-winter Christmas dinner, Saturday July 14. Get in touch if you want to come!

Wellington – I'm there for work on June 13 – let's do dinner at the Back Bencher pub! Email me if you'd like to join us.

Other places – let me know if you want to arrange something and I'll try to hook you up with others.

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National gathering

There won't be a national get-together this year as I simply don't have the time to organise it. However, if you'd like to help me put something together for about this time next year, I'd love to hear from you!

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Local news

Publicity

I caught up with Susie when I was in Wellington last week and she had some great ideas for promoting this group including television and radio coverage of our experiences and the support this group provides. Let me know if you'd like to be involved in any way - including the less scary print media which we have been involved with this year:



Latitude magazine article

I was asked to write a general article on POF for the 'Latitude' magazine at the beginning of the year and they sent me a copy of the April/May issue when it came out. It's a great magazine full of interesting articles. Hopefully this will spread the word about POF and our support group around the Canterbury region.

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Good Health magazine article

We had a great response from members wanting to be involved in this article. Thank you all for your interest. Those who have agreed will soon see their stories on our website.

Rather than doing an informative article on POF/early menopause generally, the magazine decided to interview me for their 'Insight' column where they talk to someone about their passion. We talked about my journey and how it has put me in a position to help others. I just hope she captured the essence of my message. I'll hopefully be able to share the full article with you in our next newsletter.

It has taken almost a year to try to get POF into this magazine in some way, and I'm really excited that we're now this close.

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International news



AMS www.menopause.org.au

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the society and, as mentioned above, we want to be at their conference to celebrate and to learn.

Their session dedicated to POF will be very informative and I hope to add a personal touch to the proceedings and promote our support group - and the Australian network as well - to the delegates.

We're in touch with the four speakers and the society to try to make it happen. I'll keep you updated on our progress! Many thanks to Tanya at AEMN for all your support and inspiration. 😊

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NAMS www.menopause.org

NAMS HRT position statement 2012

You can get the whole report from their website, but these are the main points:

- ET (oestrogen only) has the more favourable benefit-risk ratio compared with EPT (oestrogen + progestin) where there is increased risk of breast cancer. Long term use of ET is more flexible than EPT.
- Progestogens appeared to increase the risk of breast cancer ... and it can also affect mood. "A combination of oestrogen with an oestrogen agonist/antagonist is currently under investigation and may become an alternate option to progestogen."
- P7 (for POF patients): OCP is well documented to be safe for young women, suggesting that HRT has minimal risk for us and, of course, added benefit for our bones. They conclude: "in the absence of contraindications, NAMS recommends the use of HT or oral contraceptives until the median age of natural menopause, with periodic reassessment."

Read the *Medpage Today* article [here](#)

See the [Health News](#) section of this newsletter for more HRT news.

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www.daisynetwork.org.uk

Their annual conference is being held next month in London. It's always a great day of support and information. One day when we have a committee (see "[We Need You!](#)" above) I hope we will be able to offer NZ women something similar.

I'll be sending out another of their newsletters soon. In the meantime, check out their brand new website, forum and [public Facebook page](#).

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Magazine Articles

It seems 'early menopause' is getting a fair bit of publicity this year so far. Here are a few other articles we've spotted:

Grazia

Davina noticed an item in the February 20 issue of this Australian magazine. It featured one woman's personal story plus some facts and figures plus where to go for further information. Great article.

Australian Women's Weekly

Tanya from the Australian Early Menopause Network contributed to an article on menopause. It's always good to show readers there are many ways to go through menopause and Tanya's positive outlook on her surgery was inspiring to read.

Sadly they didn't try to be as well-rounded in the NZ edition and we weren't asked to be involved. It would've been good to promote NZEM, but good on you Tanya for doing your bit for our Aussie sisters! You can visit her site for more on what the group offers www.aemn.com.au

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Recent studies

Not all HRT regimens are equal

Physiological sex steroid replacement in premature ovarian failure: randomized crossover trial of effect on uterine volume, endometrial thickness and blood flow, compared with a standard regimen
<http://tinyurl.com/7alh8jg>

Summary: The effects of long-term administration of physiological sex steroid replacement (pSSR) therapy using transdermal oestradiol and vaginal progesterone was compared with standard SSR (sSSR) therapy using oral ethinylestradiol and norethisterone in this randomised crossover study of 34 women with premature ovarian failure.

Comment (Dr. Mary Birdsall, Fertility Associates): Even though this is a small study and there was a high drop-out rate, it suggests that oestradiol patches and vaginal progesterone may increase uterine volumes and endometrial thickness compared to standard HRT regimens. Whether this translates to improved pregnancy rates on a donor egg programme remains to be determined but I will certainly consider a more physiological sex steroid replacement regimen when I am next seeing a young woman with ovarian failure who is wishing to conceive into the future.

Comment (NZEM): This UK study shows different HRT regimens have different effects on our bodies. This study was looking at endometrial thickness and fertility, but the type of HRT we're on obviously affects our whole body and this would explain why it can take a while to find the right regime. It's worth doing your homework to make sure you're happy with the treatment you're taking. A good place to start is our forum where we have two posts with links to good advice:

- [Scientific Advice on HRT](#)
- [Scientific Advice on Bioidentical HRT](#)

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Fertility Research

- [Growing eggs from stem cells](#) - Belfast Telegraph (07/04/12)
- [Ovary transplants](#) - Daily Mail UK (25/03/12)

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Health news

IMS HRT press release

The International Menopause Society has recently released a press statement to inform the public that the current interpretation of the WHI trial support a return to “a rational use of HT, initiated near the menopause”.

The full statement is available to read on the AMS website, along with supporting commentary – www.menopause.org.au – you can find it in the ‘What’s New’ section on the home page.

The story was picked up in the [Daily Telegraph](#) and the [Wall St Journal](#)

I think this is very reassuring for women in our situation who are faced with potentially having to take hormones for 20 or more years.

Other interesting headlines

- [Effective non-medical hot flush treatment for breast cancer survivors](#)
- [Improve breast cancer survival with soy?](#)
- [Early Menopause is red flag for bone health](#)
- [Oestrogen may prevent stroke in younger women](#)
- [Getting the most from your doctor’s visit](#)
- [Let’s stop ignoring infertility](#)

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What's On Guide

Free Fertility Information Evening

Tuesday June 19

Fertility Associates, Greenlane

For more info, ph 520 9520

Fertility NZ AK Facilitator training day

Saturday June 23, 1-5pm

We need more facilitators for our contact groups which provide people with “an opportunity to meet others experiencing infertility and gain support in an informal and relaxed setting”. If you'd like to be involved, please email me.

Daisy Network Annual Conference

Saturday June 30

London, England

NZEM Auckland Mid-Winter Christmas Dinner

Saturday July 14

Venue TBC

North American Menopause Society 22nd Annual Meeting

October 3-6, 2012

Orlando, Florida

Australasian Menopause Society 16th Annual Congress

October 12-14, 2012

Melbourne, Australia

Fertility NZ support group meetings

Groups available around the country. See [our forum post](#) for more information.

FNZ Beyond Childlessness Support Group

Queen's Birthday Monday lunch – June 4

Email: Beyondchildlessness@gmail.com

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