



DECEMBER '08 NEWSLETTER

Hi ladies (and Andrew),

Well, that's another year just about over. Where does the time go?

On a personal note, I'd like to say it's been a pretty tough year for me and I'd like to thank everyone for your support both on a personal level and within the group. I may not have been expecting to meet you under these circumstances, but I'm so thankful you're there. You inspire me daily with your strength, courage, and good humour in the face of this diagnosis – and all of life's other challenges. I treasure your friendship that enriches my life.

Stay safe this holiday season and let's all look forward to the gifts 2009 will bring.

Merry Christmas!

Warm wishes,
Nicole x



The year that was...

Group News:

[Our Forums](#) started in January and have gone from strength to strength. People are viewing them daily and there's a lot of great information and personal experience we can all learn from. Please check them out if you haven't already!

This year, we've gained 18 new members and while it's obviously not great news for you guys, I'm so glad you found us. In most instances, you found us via [our website](#) which is just awesome. If we



The year that was...

Other News:

In January, the FDA took action against pharmacies making false claims about 'bioidentical' hormones.

In my opinion this raised some much-needed awareness among patients and doctors about the risks and the 'unknown quantities' with this medication.

Choosing your health regimen is a personal decision, but must be made with a clear view of potential risks and benefits.



IVF

There are many in the group in the middle of or about to begin IVF treatment – me included.

I keep hearing "it's only a matter of time with IVF" and I believe it, but gosh, it's hard to win the battle with time and our emotions, isn't it?! Especially at this time of year when kids seem to take centre stage.

can't rely on the medical community to always refer patients for more help, at least we know women can rely on a 'Google' search.

There are posts on the forums from some of these new members so, to all members, if you haven't already, please take a moment to welcome these brave women to the group. Thank you to everyone who already has – your encouraging words are appreciated.

We've had a couple of get-togethers this year. The national gathering at Waiwera over Queen's Birthday weekend was a roaring success and I think it'd be a great location for another time.

The Auckland girls also had a 'pot luck' lunch at Trudie's new home in Whangaparaoa in September and it was great to meet and get to know more of you wonderful women.

There will be more get-togethers next year, and I encourage everyone to come along as we always have such a great time learning from each other – especially how to have a laugh about the situation we're in. There really is nothing quite like meeting in person.

If you'd like to organise a get-together in your area, please let me know and I'll do what I can to help.

Here are some coping tips from the book *"Taking Charge of Your Infertility"* available from our library:

- Spend quality time with your partner doing things you enjoy – this is not only good for your relationship but also a handy distraction.
- If you feel "in limbo", maybe pick up a new hobby or sport.
- Take time out from treatment if you need to, and come back recharged.
- Keep talking with each other – with a counsellor if necessary. It's easy to get out of synch with each other.
- Expect change and be involved in it, with your partner, every step of the way.
- Aim for a realistic attitude, rather than pessimistic.
- Be informed. I know you guys are very clued up, but it doesn't hurt to hear your 'obsession' (as some may call it) is a fantastic coping tool.

This is certainly true for me. My knowledge of the 'system' means I'm better prepared for our next round. And I'm going to ask way more questions!

- I found taking small steps towards the next 'plan' has helped me get over past disappointments.

For where to go for more information, please visit [my post](#) on our forums.

In November on the Breakfast programme, Dr Guy Gudex was promoting a new AMH fertility test.

It is a simple blood test, measuring Antimullerian Hormone levels to get an idea of how many/what quality eggs a woman has left.

It may not help us, but imagine what it could do for women in the future if it became part of a regular check-up. They could get the early warning many of us wished we'd had.

More information is on [the forum](#).

There have been many positive reports on HRT as scientists revisit the results of the WHI trial.

I have documents from the International Menopause Society and the North American Menopause Society, released in the middle of this year, which I can send you if you'd like to have a read.



The focus this year was really on our growing membership, but we did make some progress as far as 'spreading the word' about us goes.

In October the Royal NZ College of GPs had an article about us and a link to our website in their regular e-newsletter that goes to all of their members. Two years of persistence finally paid off!

So maybe we didn't get in as much legwork as last year (sending flyers to specialists around the country), but I think the effect was possibly even greater.

GPs are the 'first port of call' for most women with menstrual irregularities, so if we can get them on board, FSH tests might be ordered sooner, which might lead to more speedy diagnosis. If just one GP took any notice of it we've made a difference and that's something to celebrate!

Creating more awareness of POF is one of our primary aims and we'll keep looking for ways to do that. All ideas are very welcome.

Congratulations are due to the members of the group who had children this year whether spontaneously or via egg donation.

This is the miracle many of us are still waiting for and further evidence that there is always hope and always a way to fulfil your dreams.

Never give up!



Your Thoughts

Do you have any helpful suggestions for that awful question, "So, when are you going to have children?"

This is a question I've been asked on many occasions in the 3 years since my diagnosis and it still sometimes stops me in my tracks as I assess the recipient's willingness to hear the truth.

My favourite at the moment is to begin with "we're trying" and hope it ends at that. If it doesn't, I figure the person I'm talking to could do with a dose of reality, so opt for the plain cold truth that my ovaries have stopped working. This tends to put an end to a conversation I'd really rather not be having!

However, I know there are more tactful ways of dealing with this situation and I'd love to hear your favourites and how they've worked for you.

If I get a few replies I'll post them on our forums – anonymously if you wish. I know some websites already have some great suggestions, but I thought it might be nice if we could supply some 'local' advice.

2009 projects

I'm told our new-look website is ready to 'go live' but there is just a small hold-up with the providers of the new system. So keep a lookout for some new and updated information in the new year.

We're always on the lookout for new material for the website – book reviews, website reviews, personal stories etc. How about items for a new 'Humour' page?

Please let me know if you have something you'd like to contribute.

One of our super-motivated members, Jackie, has had some great ideas for improving our website. She has been contacting various related organisations (like Fertility NZ, Fertility Associates, Nurture Foundation, Australasian Menopause Society etc.) about putting their logos on our website as a 'seal of approval'. We're hoping this will make us look like a reliable site to all our visitors.

Thanks, Jackie, for all your enthusiasm – it's infectious!

As I said earlier, we'll continue promoting awareness of POF/Early Menopause among the medical profession next year. We have flyers to hand out to GPs and specialists and if you'd like to help in your area, please let me know.

We need help EVERYWHERE!

I'm also keen to hear from you if you have any contacts with people or organisations you think may be able to help with this or any of our projects. It's all about networking, isn't it!



Our resources

What better place to start your research than right here with NZEM! Please visit [our website](#) and check out our recommended websites and the books in our library.

Better still, our members have first-hand knowledge and a wide range of experiences. If you have a question, a solution, or even just a titbit of advice, please jump on [our forums](#) and share with the rest of us.

If you'd rather skip all that and want to get some info 'from the horse's mouth' or just need to chat, I'm always happy to talk and/or put you in touch with others in the group who might know where you're coming from.



Housekeeping

if you have finished with any library books, please send them back before you head off on your holidays.

If you know of any resources we don't yet have, I'd love to hear from you. Especially if you'd like to donate some to the group to help other members.



Funny Corner

A study has revealed that the kind of face a woman finds attractive on a man can differ depending on where she is in her menstrual cycle.

For example: If she is ovulating, she is attracted to men with rugged and masculine features. However, if she is menstruating, or menopausal, she tends to be more attracted to a man with duct tape over his mouth and a spear lodged in his chest while he is on fire.

No further studies are expected.

<http://www.menopausematters.co.uk/forum/index.php?topic=3188.0>