

# Our Survey Said...

**The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs from 45 onwards, as a woman's estrogen levels decline. Most women will experience menopausal symptoms, which for some can be quite severe and have a significant impact on everyday activities. Prior to the launch of Talkhealth's Online Clinic on Menopause during March 2017, a survey was created in collaboration with Associate Specialist Gynaecologist, Dr Heather Currie to understand more about the challenges women face during this period of their lives.**

**Considering their own experiences, participants were asked to define menopause:**

*"It's a never ending jumble of hormones, mood swings and faulty temperature control, adding and removing layers all day long."*

*"It creeps up on you as you start to experience various symptoms which at their peak are very distressing and impact greatly on day to day life."*

**Participants were asked what impact, if any, menopause has had on their relationship with their partner, to which the most common response was having no sex drive, a lack in sexual confidence and an increase in mood swings which in turn causes arguments and feelings of animosity.**

## Healthcare visits

Over 60% of participants had been to see a healthcare professional regarding their menopausal symptoms however 60% stated that going to see a healthcare professional did not help them better understand how to cope with the transition.



**Asked to offer one piece of advice for women who had not yet gone through the transition, responses were:**

*"Get medical advice and read up on all available help, both medical and alternative medicines."*

*"Talk about it to someone as it can be depressing with no support."*

## Treatment

Most participants who either were going through the menopause or had already been through it did not take any form of treatment. Around half had either taken HRT, or were taking it currently, with 25% actively not taking it at all. The main reasons for stopping taking HRT were because they had gone through the menopause, they had been taking it for too long and a GP advised them to stop, or it did not work effectively for them:

*"The symptoms diminished, were a lot lighter. I was feeling better and the transition was a lot smoother (after taking HRT)."*

*"I was given HRT but I found the side effects too much to cope with and I haven't received any advice on what to do."*

Considering the overall experience of menopause, two thirds said that it was a negative experience, however there are many who found that the experience was not as bad as they had first thought, seeing it more positively.

## Dr Currie says:

"The findings of this survey are very much in line with results from the BMS Ipsos Mori survey in 2016 and confirm that more information and education is needed so that women can better understand the consequences of the menopause, be better prepared and know where to go to seek help. Menopause affects every woman, in many different ways and only by women accessing accurate information can they truly make informed choices about the management of their menopause."

### Suggested resources

- [www.menopausematters.co.uk](http://www.menopausematters.co.uk)
- [www.womens-health-concern.org](http://www.womens-health-concern.org)
- [www.managemymenopause.co.uk](http://www.managemymenopause.co.uk)