

# Listen to what the men said...

**Menopause Matters has been running a partners survey on our website [menopausematters.co.uk](http://menopausematters.co.uk) and also sent it out to subscribers of our weekly newsletter.**



**M**enopause Matters has previously run questionnaires on aspects of the menopause and has examined how well informed health professionals and the public are on issues affected by the menopause. With any survey, it is accepted that there is an element of bias in that those having certain problems or experiences are more likely to complete the survey than those who do not, but useful information is still obtained, which can influence practice or further research. Topics have included osteoporosis, sex, heart, bladder and bowel health. These findings have been published and presented nationally and internationally and have influenced clinical practice as well as empowering women to make changes and seek professional help.

We wanted to highlight current awareness amongst men and find out what could help to increase understanding and empathy towards their partner before and during their menopause transition.

**Here are a selection of the results:**

**Q: How did you first find out about the menopause?**

Of those who answered the question about how they found out about menopause 228 said it was from their partner. Other sources included looking at the internet, talking with a relative or by word of mouth.

**Q: Has menopause affected your relationship with your partner?**

Almost all who answered said that their partner's menopause had affected their relationship with only 22 saying it had not and 13 who were unsure.

**Q: How has your partner's menopause affected you?**

Of those who answered 383 had been affected by less sex and/or reduced sleep.

160 experienced annoyance, low mood or anxiety, or a combination of these.

**Q: Do menopausal symptoms ever cause arguments between you and your partner?**

330 believed that partners menopausal symptoms caused arguments.

**Q: Is the menopause a subject that you would talk about openly with your partner?**

Reassuringly 367 felt that they could talk openly with their partner about menopause.

**Q: In retrospect do you feel you knew enough about the menopause to support your partner?**

Of those who answered, 65 said yes and 181 said no.

***A huge thank you to the 865 men who took the time to respond to the survey...a really great response and indicative of what we anticipate to be a growing awareness - but there's still work to be done...***

***We received many requests for information and some great suggestions...***

"I just don't know how to deal with the emotional rollercoaster."

"Make information freely available in surgeries when partners are diagnosed with meno symptoms and give information to spouses/partners."

"I would like to know how to support her emotionally."

"Make information freely available in surgeries when partners are diagnosed with meno symptoms and give information to spouses/partners."

"There should be more leaflets and contacts for partners to access information. There should be more in depth information about not just hot flushes and mood swings as it goes much further than that."

"There's an awful lot of emphasis on hot flushes but very little mention of the debilitating effects on mental health, vaginal atrophy, insomnia, palpitations etc. It went undiagnosed by many doctors as my wife wasn't listened to. If the doctors don't know enough to diagnose I can't possibly know enough to support her in the way I would like to."

"I want to know how to deal with emotional support trying to lift her mood."

"I would like more information on how to identify symptoms and impact of menopause...."

"Had no idea that our sexual relationship would be affected so badly. Amazed that this isn't higher profile. it must be the cause of many marital problems!"

"I want to know how to direct her to a health expert and raise the subject."

"Had very little idea of the emotional changes she would go through."

"I would like to know more about natural remedies and also more on how I can be supportive to my partner."

"It should be part of the curriculum in secondary schools when learning sex education, biology and reproduction."

"I don't really want any info, being a man."

"Men need to understand that menopause for a woman affects her self esteem, her social standing, her physical wellbeing, her emotional state and her sex drive. If it does all this to her you are not going to escape the fallout. Engage with her. Learn all you can. Menopausal advice talks to women about what they are going through. Talk to men too. We need to understand. We need practical advice about how to support the person you love."

"A support site for men and more information readily available from the NHS for men when women are diagnosed."

"Talk to your partner, listen to them and get some understanding of the impact on their life."