

**GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE & HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH CASE  
CONFERENCE TEACHING MODULE**

**MENOPAUSE – Part 1**

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**CASE 1**

**WW is a 45 year-old woman complaining of hot flashes for 4 months. Her menses are regular. She wants to know if she is actually beginning her menopause transition?**

1. Is she beginning the menopause transition? What is the medical definition of menopause?
2. Is there a lab test to reliably diagnose menopause?
3. What is a hot flash? A hot flush?
4. What are common diseases that can cause symptoms perceived as hot flashes? Should you check an FSH level?

**After obtaining more history, you feel that her hot flashes are not indicative of underlying disease. You reassure her that hot flashes are common, in that they occur in 25-40% of regularly-menstruating women in their 40's. She returns to you 3 months later, reporting that ever since she last saw you, her menses have been irregular. Her hot flashes have worsened and are interfering with her sleep.**

5. What would be an expected problem with using HT in a woman who has not had 23 months of amenorrhea? What hormonal regimen might help her with those 2 symptoms? Are there contraindications for which you need to screen?

**CASE 2**

**O.Y. is a 55-year old woman with hot flashes for the last 2 ½ years. She has not had a menstrual period for 2 years, and has an intact uterus. She tells you she feels all up to date regarding the controversies about HT, and she feels she needs to try it anyway, for a brief period.**

6. Define the following terms:
  - menopausal hormone therapy (HT)
  - estrogen therapy (ET)
  - estrogen-progestin therapy (EPT).

What are the adverse effects of ET compared to EPT?

**Given the recent Women's Health Initiative results, O.Y. is curious as to how estrogen therapy and oral estrogen therapy differ.**

7. How do oral and transdermal estrogen therapy compare in suppressing hot flashes? What about estradiol gel or Femring estradiol ring?
8. What are contraindications to ET or EPT?
9. If she uses a patch, will she need progesterone too? If you offer her Femring vaginal estradiol ring does she need progesterone?