



Therapy combats breast cancer patients' menopause symptoms

Breast cancer patients who suffer debilitating menopausal symptoms as a result of treatment can find relief by learning how to manage hot flushes, night sweats and lack of sleep through therapy.

Women who received cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which included lessons in breathing, how to reduce stress and manage menopausal symptoms found their condition had improved significantly after three months.

The good news for women was announced last night (Monday) by psychologists Dr Eleanor Mann and Professor Myra Hunter, of King's College, London, in a presentation at the annual conference of the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) in Birmingham.

Two dozen women who had completed breast cancer treatment were given six 90 minute weekly sessions of CBT. Three months later they reported that troublesome symptoms were half as frequent as they had been and that there was an almost 60 per cent reduction in what symptoms they perceived as problems.

Professor Hunter told the NCRI conference: "After the therapy feelings of depression and anxiety lessened and emotional functioning and vitality improved. The women also felt less negative about hot flushes and night sweats.

"The results are very promising as significant improvements in the women were maintained at the three month follow up. Now we are working on a larger controlled trial, funded by Cancer Research UK, that will include physiological as well as subjective measures of hot flushes.

"Ultimately we hope to show that cognitive behavioural therapy given in groups might help women with troublesome menopausal symptoms that develop after breast cancer treatment."

Martin Ledwick, head of Cancer Research UK's information nurses, said: "Breast cancer treatment can accelerate the menopause or result in older women suffering from debilitating symptoms.

"Getting hot flushes and night sweats is a double blow to women already coping with a cancer diagnosis and can lead to feelings of depression and helplessness. So it is very encouraging to learn that cognitive behavioural therapy might be able to give women a boost and help them cope though such a difficult time in their lives."

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For media enquiries please contact Sally Staples in the NCRI press office on 0121 335 8401, or the London office on 020 7061 8300, or out of hours, the duty press officer, on 07050 264059

To read the abstract visit: http://www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference/programme/speakerAbstracts/2009Para_Myra_Hunter.asp

Anyone wishing to learn more about the trial should contact Dr Eleanor Mann by email: eleanor.mann@kcl.ac.uk or telephone **020 7188 9560**.

About the NCRI Cancer Conference

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference is the UK's major forum for showcasing the best British and international cancer research. The Conference offers unique opportunities for networking and sharing knowledge by bringing together world leading experts from all cancer research disciplines. The fifth annual NCRI Cancer Conference is taking place from the 4-7 October 2009 at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham.

For more information visit www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference

About the NCRI

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in April 2001. It is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry which promotes co-operation in cancer research among the 21 **member organisations** for the benefit of **patients**, the public and the scientific community.

For more information visit www.ncri.org.uk

NCRI members are: the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Association for International Cancer Research; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; CHILDREN with LEUKAEMIA, Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia Research; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Assembly Government (Wales Office of Research and Development for Health & Social Care); The Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.

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