

**HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY. SOME CONSIDERATIONS AFTER THE RECENT STUDIES AFTER THE RECENT STUDIES. SKIN PATCH THERAPY AND REDUCTION OF SIDE EFFECTS.**

The publication of Women Health Initiative Study (WHI-Women Health Initiative) has created an unjustified concern with public opinion, particularly among menopausal women.

According to various gynecologists and generic practitioners, in fact, many women suffering with menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, sweats, mood swings and tiredness, concerned about this news, have abandoned the therapy without any type of therapeutic reason. The spread of inaccurate news, full of inconsistencies from a scientific point of view, has convinced many women to stop the hormone replacement therapy despite getting substantial benefits from it.

This is the new interpretation emerging from the debates and discussions at various levels held within the last few weeks among researchers of WHI and international experts, molding and rectifying the excessive worries on the possible ties between this type of cure and the development of cancer.

WHI researchers and experts from various countries have opened an in depth debate on the theme with the goal of clarifying the therapy's value and limitation, avoiding though communicating any form of alarming news that cannot be verified by the studies conducted so far.

For symptomatic women the benefits from the cure are far greater than the risks and abandoning HRT was a mistake. WHI's study, published in July 2002, analyzed only the effect of one hormone replacement therapy cure (an oral combination with medium-high dosage) which increased the risk of heart attack by 29%, breast cancer by 26% and ictus by 41%. These data, though alarming on the surface, need to be interpreted.

The real risks for each woman are extremely low: only 2.5% of the volunteers had health problems, the mortality index and the total percentage of tumors in the women's group treated with hormone replacement therapy was equal to the control group.

For what can be inferred from the WHI study is that the therapy reaches its optimum effect when it can be tailored for each patient. Even the hormone replacement therapy follows the tendency of modern pharmacology that uses a "Personalized" approach by prescribing a dosage based on the patient's characteristics. That is because only with this method the best therapeutic results can be reached, exponentially reducing side effects.

Also, it is worth noticing that the effect of various therapies utilizing low dosage and delivering it via skin patch is much more reassuring.

In a large study conducted in France with over 3,000 women for nine years utilizing mainly skin patch delivery and progestins different from the ones used in the WHI (medroxyprogesterone acetate), the risk of breast cancer is

not highlighted, thus reducing drastically one of the most feared side effect of Hormone Replacement Therapy.

Naturally this minor incidence of side effects in patch therapy is found in the analysis for thrombosis and cardiovascular risks. Indeed, according to a large study conducted again in France, usage of skin patch therapy is not associated with an increase of thrombosis of the veins, contrary to what happens with therapies delivered orally.