

PRESS RELEASE



Date: 29th April 2005
Time: Embargo 001 hours
Subject: Million Women Study - findings

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Latest data on HRT from the UK Million Women Study

The Committee on the Safety of Medicines (CSM) is aware of the Lancet publication on the latest data from the UK Million Women Study. This adds important information to our growing knowledge of the effects of different types of HRT and underline the need for caution in long term use. This new data on endometrial cancer (cancer of the lining of the womb) is unlikely to change the overall balance of risks and benefits for the short term use of HRT.

Different types of HRT show differing effects on the risk of cancer of the breast and endometrium and both of these need to be considered when deciding the most suitable form of therapy for an individual woman. Each decision to start or continue HRT should be made on an individual basis with a fully informed patient and should take into account any changes in her risk factors and personal preferences.

The CSM has today repeated their advice that:

- For the treatment of menopausal symptoms the benefits of short-term HRT are considered to outweigh the risks in the majority of women.
- In all cases, it is good practice to use the lowest effective dose for the shortest possible time and to review the need to continue treatment at least annually.
- For postmenopausal women over 50 years who are at an increased risk of bone fracture, HRT should be used to prevent osteoporosis only in those who are intolerant of, or contraindicated for, other osteoporosis therapies.

The CSM's Expert Working Group on HRT has kept the safety of HRT under continuous review and will give detailed consideration to this new data next week. The product information for all HRT products contains warnings about the risks of breast and endometrial cancer.

Professor Gordon Duff, Chairman of the CSM (Committee on the Safety of Medicines) said: "This latest data re-inforces our previous advice that it is essential to consider all the risks and benefits when deciding HRT treatment for an individual woman. There is no need for any immediate action by women taking HRT, but they should discuss their need for treatment with their prescriber at their next review."

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