

UNIT 4: REPRODUCTIVE ENDOCRINOLOGY, INFERTILITY & RELATED TOPICS

Educational Topic 47: Menopause

Rationale: Women may spend much of their lives in the postmenopausal years. Physicians should understand the physical and emotional changes caused by menopause.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

A student should be able to:

- Define menopause and describe changes in the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis associated with perimenopause/menopause
- Describe symptoms and physical exam findings related to perimenopause/menopause
- Discuss management options for patients with perimenopause/menopausal symptoms
- Counsel patients regarding the menopausal transition
- Discuss long-term changes associated with menopause

TEACHING CASE

CASE: A 53-year-old, G3P3 woman, whose last menstrual period was 4 months ago presents to the office with hot flashes, emotional lability, and insomnia. She experiences hot flashes 2-3 times per day and occasionally at night. She has been having trouble sleeping and is extremely fatigued. Since age 14, her periods have been regular until 2 years ago, when they began to space out to every 2-3 months. She is sexually active and recently has noted some dyspareunia. The patient rarely exercises. She smokes 2 packs of cigarettes a day and drinks alcohol socially. She recently started taking a soy supplement. She does not have any pertinent gynecological, medical or surgical history. Her family history is significant for her mother sustaining a hip fracture at age 60 and a sister with breast cancer and high cholesterol. On examination, she has normal vital signs. She is 5'4" tall and weighs 123 lbs. On pelvic examination, she has decreased vaginal rugae and a pale, small cervix. No masses or tenderness are palpated on bimanual exam.

COMPETENCY-BASED DISCUSSION & KEY TEACHING POINTS:

Competencies addressed:

- Patient Care
- Medical Knowledge
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Systems-based Practice

1. What are the symptoms of perimenopause and menopause?
2. How do you make the diagnosis of menopause?
3. What are the patient's risk factors for osteoporosis?
4. How do you diagnose and treat atrophic vaginitis?
5. How do you counsel a patient regarding estrogen and alternative therapies?
6. What laboratory and diagnostic tests would you order for this patient?

REFERENCES

Beckman CRB, et al. Obstetrics and Gynecology. 7th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, 2013.

Hacker NF, Moore JG, et al. Essentials of Obstetrics and Gynecology. 5th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders, 2010.