

Talk 2. Menopause

Catherine Pestano, The Open University



*Talk 2 – MENOPAUSE and changing attitudes to what people want from this stage of life - Ageing Well
Public Talks Series 23/24*

Hormonal changes at midlife

Catherine Pestano, D.Prof.

As people & also professionals of any gender, it is important that this process affecting over half the population of the planet is understood. The Menopause directly affects all those born with a womb/ovaries.

Dr Catherine Pestano

I am a Visiting Fellow and Associate Lecturer at Faculty of Wellbeing, Education & Language Studies, The Open University.

I am a social worker, community musician and menopause warrior/activist.

Today I have a creative book launch - *Menopause The Anthology*, today, online, available through Eventbrite & Arachne Press.

I am working on an edited collection of diverse narratives for a book gathering together a more diverse informed menopause, and would like to invite you all to consider contributing.

What we will cover:

- This talk will look at the menopause transition in some detail.
- It will also consider the andropause.
- Resources are provided at the end to support everyone in asking for help needed at this time of life.



"Moonlight" 4/11 1996

CBWA

Hormonal changes at midlife

- Menopause affects women plus non-binary people, indeed everyone born with womb/ovaries, for example transmen. Changes affect many at the midlife menopause transition both directly and indirectly.
- People can experience a significant, substantial series of changes from 30s (more typically 40s) onwards, which give rise to a large range of menopause symptoms, affecting every aspect of living. Changes to the sex hormones in the body can also be brought on early and suddenly, through surgery, treatment or a condition.
- The impact is widespread and up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of people have challenges that are difficult, with a smaller percentage finding the changes negligible or manageable.
- We will all know, care about, and work, or connect with people affected by sex-hormone changes associated with the menopause.

So what *is* the menopause transition?

- Medical definition is the day a year after periods have stopped. Actual menopause is a moment. Though it can be hard to work out when it was.
- Several years (2-7 years) leading up to the menopause are called the Perimenopause stage. Considerable symptoms arise while someone is still bleeding, and can be hard to manage.
- Post-menopause is after that moment in time. Bleeding has stopped. How long might symptoms last? Many will experience up to 15 years and some experience symptoms till the end of their lives.
- So the peri and post phases of the transition take the time.

Main symptoms might include:

- Physical – exhaustion, genito-urinary & atrophy, joint pain, excessive bleeding, palpitations, bone loss, dry eye, tinnitus, burning tongue, restless legs. Hot flushes, night sweats.
- Emotional – anxiety, depression, flat-lining, anger, mood flux, tears, rage, irrational fear, fluctuating mood
- Cognitive/Psychological – brain fog, sleeplessness, sensory overload, hard to concentrate, neurodiverse experiences, overwhelm
- Relational – family, work, sexual responsiveness/libido loss

Dr Louise Newson has a free app called Balance & free symptom tracker sheets to use. These can help your healthcare professional understand your unique needs at any stage of the transition. The British Menopause Society lists searchable local experts in your area.

What can be helpful at this time?

- Many will need hormonal replacement help, in the same way that someone with diabetes might.
- Some will be able to manage through lifestyle shifts including diet, relaxation and activity.
- All these elements may support wellbeing and health for everyone through this long transition.

As noted, Menopause onset is varied in age, style and severity.

Over 45 – NICE guidance states diagnosis is to be by symptoms only. It is treatable – Body-identical systemic and localised hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is recommended as a first response.

Full spectrum T4 thyroid function testing, and testosterone gel may help (for an everyday sense of wellbeing).

Along with medical interventions, lifestyle changes also help, especially around the **‘Five Pillars for Ageing Well’** to reduce stress and renegotiate social roles. Many women need expert external help and find it hard to get. They may also be dealing with caring stresses also. Many partners also suffer isolation and stress.

Five pillars facilitating Ageing Well

Nutrition

Hydration

Physical stimulation

Social stimulation

Cognitive stimulation



Five Pillars points to ponder

- Practices that help de-escalate the 'fight or flight' stress brought on by hormonal shifts are valuable at this time.
- Stress reduction approaches, including re-negotiating established social roles and expectations, are helpful at this time. Re-evaluating priorities - placing self more centrally.
- Women's greatest risk for suicidality is during the menopause transition.
- Adjusting or building joyful movement into daily life is both protective of bones and muscle and also good for mental wellbeing. If some of this is also in nature, this can also be additionally calming and restorative.
- Menopause cookbooks are available including the Linda Kearns cake recipe.
- An Autumnal time to harvest one's life, take inward-facing time for renewal, as with the earth. Remembering your spirit and the pre-pubescent self can be nourishing, during this time of reflection and sense-making.

The Law

The Equalities Act 2010 now has case law that means that workplaces and services need to make sure that they are treating people fairly and making adjustments. UK case law is established in three areas below.

4 protected characteristics may be relevant:

- Sex
- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment

Details in the resources



Andropause – the ‘male menopause’

- Though not in any way paralleling women’s intensity of experience, or widespread prevalence, some men can have hormone changes at this time of life, with negative or positive impacts.
- A key difference is that testosterone decline is gradual not sudden. Negative symptoms such as depression, lethargy, loss of sex drive can arise. However, these are often less related to hormone changes, and more likely to link to society’s attitudes to men, work, status and ageing.
- Help can be offered for existential or lifestyle-related negative symptoms, through therapy, CBT, diet, exercise. In a small percentage of cases, a particular hormone loss condition can be treated with medical intervention/with replacement hormones if severely affecting wellbeing.

Thank you for listening and your questions are welcome.

Workplace resources, guidance and policy also available free from catherine.pestano@open.ac.uk

Resources: at the end of the session's slides

Resources

International menopause awareness day 18th Oct, use the following resources to raise awareness: <https://www.imsociety.org/education/world-menopause-day/>

NICE guidance on the menopause <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG23>

Pausitivity free poster campaign and resources <https://www.pausitivity.co.uk/>

Dr Louise Newson Free CPD for GP surgeries <https://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk/>

Activism and magazine <https://www.menopausematters.co.uk/>

Case law on Henpicked menopause hub <https://henpicked.net/menopause-hub/>

British Menopause Society <https://thebms.org.uk/>

Andropause <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/male-menopause/>

Open Learn: [Candles and campfires: creativity and the menopause transition - OpenLearn - Open University](#)

55/REDEFINED

How to unlock the value from an ageing population

LIFE /
life-redefined.co

WORK /
work-redefined.co

JOBS /
jobs-redefined.co

What's Coming Up?

- 1) The backdrop & data you need to know
- 2) What's the problem?
- 3) Why care?
- 4) What are other Global corporates doing in this space?

An Ageing Population is a

Global Megatrend

impacting us as individuals, our
customers, colleagues and every
company

On average,
a child born today
will **live to 103**



This century,
30 healthy years
were added to
life expectancy

Ageing population
+
record low birth rates
= social change
needed




By 2050, our
working age population
will **shrink by 25 %**



While the
over 60 population
will **grow**

by over 40%

We must
add **10 economically
productive years**
to life



What Are The 3 BIG Problems?

55/**REDEFINED**

1) The 3 Stage Life is Over. It's Time to Retire Retirement!



- Boredom
- Invisibility
- Change in financial needs from work
- Depression
- Desire to learn something new/change career
- New confidence to start a business
- Search for purpose

2) There is a MASSIVE Marketing Disconnect!



Only 5%
of ad spend
targets over 50s

74%
of over 50s said
they felt patronised
by advertising

75%
of wealth held
by over 50s



Do I look like I
need a
bus pass?



Do I look like I
want to
retire?



Do I look like I
want to
slow down?



Do I look like I
was born
yesterday?



3) Our Workplaces are Ageist

Serious Bias in the HR & Recruitment Function...

Recruiters aged 25-30 are **39%** less likely to present an over 50s candidate vs recruiters aged 46-50.

HR leaders aged 25-30 are **19%** less likely to re-train/skill over 50s than 46–50-year-old HR leaders

56%

of employees want
to continue working
beyond the age of 65...



but...

65%

...of employers encourage
retirement at legal
retirement age or before



65%

of employees believe the jobs market is closed
to them applying for roles aged over 55

90%

of employees aged 55-65 believe they have transferable skills to move role/industry if the employer was prepared to offer technical training...



89% of over-55s would be prepared to take a drop in salary to retrain in a new role/industry

but...



65%

of employers will only hire people already experienced and delivering in the specific role and will not train on technical role or industry skills for 55+ age group



70%

think it would be difficult for
someone to re-enter the workplace
or start a new career over 50¹⁴

82% have not
been contacted by
a recruiter in the
last 12 months

Only **16%** are
active on LinkedIn!
(22% London/10% Wales)

Gendered ageism is on the rise

The shocking stats don't stop there. Our research also found that while almost one third (30 per cent) of those retired felt forced to do so, women are 10 per cent more likely to be forced to retire than men - demonstrating gendered ageism is still prevalent. Similarly, it is 25% more important to women than men want flexible working which suggests that women still bare the main responsibilities as care giver to elderly parents or grandchildren.



30%+



of those that have retired,
felt forced to do so¹²

One in five

feel they have been overlooked for promotion
due to age



48%

are worried about money due to
the cost of living and 19% are
struggling to afford essentials





32%

work for a sense of fulfilment and purpose



21%

would select an employer based on their clear and transparent diversity policy including age



48%

want either a flexible/part time job or a job that fits around their lifestyle or out-of-work responsibilities. 8% more women wanted these options than men - suggesting they still have the lion's share of caring responsibilities





Why Care?

55/REDEFINED

**If your business doesn't
have an *Age Strategy*,
it doesn't have a
*Growth Strategy***

More vacancies than unemployed people,
global talent shortage

Research by The Princes Responsible Business Trust shows that workers aged over 50 are **five times less likely** to change jobs than younger counterparts. They are also **200% less likely** to take a day off sick than those under 30.

9 in 10 workers 50+ are somewhat or very satisfied with their jobs, **only 3 in 10** workers younger than age 25 say the same

Lived experience and fine-tuned people skills generally foster team & **customer empathy, service and satisfaction** thereby helping drive sales and customer retention

“ Employing older workers **saves companies time and money** ”

External Benchmarking



55/REDEFINED

We're Age- Enabling Some of the World's Largest Brands

DIAGEO



Hastings DIRECT

HARGREAVES
LANSDOWN

dentsu Capita

Hilton



Page
Outsourcing



Reed



The Business Case is not Ageism...

Enabling you to unlock the value from an Ageing Population


Reduced
Attrition

Improved
Customer
Outcomes




Lower
Absenteeism

Sustainable
Skills
Pipeline




De-risk Legal
Exposure

Increased
Employee
Engagement





Enabling Businesses to Redefine Age

INSIGHTS & IMPACT

Redefine

Insight

Age Data Diagnostic

Benchmarking

Accreditation

SOLUTIONS

Attract

Age Diverse Job Board
JOBS/REDEFINED

Attraction Campaigns for Passive 50+ Talent
LIFE/REDEFINED

Re-Skill & Unretirement

Grow

E-Learning Programmes

- > Leading Multigenerational Teams
- > Attracting & Engaging Over-50s
- > Age Conscious Inclusion

Engage

EVP Reviews

Employee/Consumer Lifestyle Platform
LIFE/REDEFINED

R/AGE
Readiness
Score



Solving Age Strategy, Globally

Top 5 Takeaways

- 1) Check your own unconscious bias re age – “senior moment” energy/health/years till retirement...they must be senior or expensive...
- 2) *“In God we trust...everyone else must bring data!”*
- 3) Discuss the research and data with your colleagues to identify any areas of unintended of bias/discrimination
- 4) Share stories – they bring all generations together
- 5) Re-think *how YOU* pivot your company strategy towards over-50s – images used / wording in job descriptions / customer ads / proactive action

An Ageing Population is a

Global Megatrend

impacting us as individuals, our
customers, colleagues and every
company



Thank You & Questions

LIFE /
life-redefined.co

WORK /
work-redefined.co

JOBS /
jobs-redefined.co

Commendation	Rationale
Take time for cognitively stimulating activities that you've always enjoyed.	Continuing favourite activities can ensure sustainability of cognitive stimulation. Long-term exposure to cognitive stimulation may be needed for practical functional benefits.
Add some new cognitive challenges, as your time and enjoyment permit	Trying new activities may enhance brain plasticity by requiring new learning or development of new cognitive strategies MUSIC LESSONS, LEARNING NEW LANGUAGE, AQUA

Recommendation	Rationale
Aim to engage in cognitively stimulating activities several times a week or more...generate some “ <i>mental sweat</i> .”	Current knowledge does not permit a prescription for how often or how long individuals should engage in cognitively stimulating activities. However, epidemiologic studies suggest that more is better, within clinically reasonable limits.
Be aware that there is no one cognitive activity, or combination of activities, that is uniquely good for reducing AD risk.	Many different types of cognitively stimulating activities have been associated with preserved cognitive skill. There are no data yet to show that cognitive activities prevent or delay AD.
Social interactions are a great way to stimulate the mind.	Group training of cognitive skills has been shown to be effective in sharpening specific cognitive skills, and broader social networks have been associated with reduced AD risk.

Summary of related resources to The Ageing Well Public Talk Series

Podcasts

Vseteckova J & King J (2020) COVID-19 Interview podcast for The Retirement Café: '[Ageing Well Under Lockdown](#)'

Vseteckova J & Broad E (2020) Podcast – Open University & The Parks Trust [Keep Me Walking – researching with people living with dementia and their carers](#) –

Vseteckova J (2020) Podcast – [Areas of research with The Open University](#)

Broad E, Methley A & Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust – [Spotter sheet and mindful walking](#).

Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Preventing brain decline while ageing](#)



Methley A, Broad E, Vseteckova J (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Walking therapy](#)

Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad (2021) Podcast OU & The Parks Trust & Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust [Understanding our memory](#)

Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) [Engaging with our environment](#)

Joannidi H, Araya Y, Broad E & Vseteckova J (2022) [Sense of self during aging: how mindfulness and nature can help](#)

The above podcasts can be also seen on [The Parks Trust YouTube Channel](#)



Vseteckova J (2020) [Ageing Well Public Talks Series](#)

Vseteckova J (2019) [5 reasons why exercising outdoors is great for people who have dementia](#)

Vseteckova J (2019) [Depression, mood and exercise](#)

Vseteckova J (2019) [Five Pillars for Ageing Well](#)

Vseteckova J (2020) [Ageing Brain](#)



Vseteckova J (2022) [Pharmacotherapy while ageing](#)

Joannidi H, Araya Y, Broad E & Vseteckova J (2022) [Sense of Self during ageing – how mindfulness and nature can help](#)

Mehta S (2022) [Medicines and personalisation while ageing](#)

Gale B (2022) [How can we prepare for death while ageing?](#)

Gale B (2022) [Valuing death at home: making preparations](#)

Methley A & Vseteckova J & Jones K (2020) [**Green & Blue & Outdoor spaces**](#)

Vseteckova J, Borgstrom E, Whitehouse A, Kent A, Hart A (2021) [**Advance Care Planning \(ACP\)**](#)

Vseteckova J (2020) [**Walking the Parks with The OU and The Parks Trust**](#)

Vseteckova J, Methley A, Broad E (2021) [**Understanding our memory**](#)

Araya Y , Broad E, Vseteckova J (2022) [**Engaging with our environment**](#)



Vseteckova J (2022) [Pharmacotherapy while ageing](#)

Joannidi H, Araya Y, Broad E & Vseteckova J (2022) [Sense of Self during ageing – how mindfulness and nature can help](#)

Mehta S (2022) [Medicines and personalisation while ageing](#)

Gale B (2022) [How can we prepare for death while ageing?](#)

Gale B (2022) [Valuing death at home: making preparations](#)



Hedges V & Vseteckova J (2023)

[What should I expect when I am nearing the end of my life?](#)

Joannidi H, Araya Y, Broad E & Vseteckova J (2022)

[Sense of self during aging: how mindfulness and nature can help](#)

Mehta S, Vseteckova J (2023) **[Ageing, health inequalities and person centred care](#)**

Mehta S, Vseteckova J (2023) **[Ageing, health inequalities and integrated approach to care](#)**

Araya Y, Broad E, Vseteckova J (2023) **[Ageing well by connecting and learning about nature outdoors](#)**



Care and caring related

Vseteckova J, (2020) [How to age well, while self-isolating](#)

Vseteckova J, (2020) [SHORT FILM - Ageing Well in Self-Isolation](#)

Vseteckova J, (2020) [ANIMATION - Keeping healthy in Self-Isolation](#)

Vseteckova J et al (2020)

[COVID-19 The effects of self-isolation and lack of physical activity on carers](#)

Taverner P, Larkin M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) [Supporting adult carers during COVID-19 pandemic](#)



Robb M, Penson M, Vseteckova J, et al. (2020) [Young carers, COVID-19 and physical activity](#)

Penson M, Vseteckova J et al. (2020) [Older Carers, COVID-19 and Physical Activity](#)

Vseteckova J & Methley A (2020) [Acceptance Commitment Therapy \(ACT\) to help carers in challenging COVID-19 times](#)



[AGEING WELL PUBLIC TALK SERIES WEBSITE](#)

[Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2023/2024](#) repository on ORDO Collections

['Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2022/2023](#) repository on ORDO Collections

['Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2021/2022](#) repository on ORDO Collections

['Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2020/2021](#) repository on ORDO Collections

['Ageing Well Public Talks' Series 2019/2020](#) repository on ORDO Collections

[Midlife MOT OpenLearn Course](#)

OpenLearnCreate Course on ['Ageing Well' 2019/2020](#)

[Home exercise no equipment – no problem](#) *Blog*

Ageing Well series of Public Talks 2023/24 - topics

Are we prepared to live longer? (Jitka Vseteckova & Rachel Turner) **September 13th 2023**

MENOPAUSE and changing attitudes to what people want from this stage of life (Catherine Pestano & Lyndsey Simpson) **October 18th 2023**

Taking Control of Dying (Barbara Gale & Victoria Hedges) **November 22nd 2023**

Learning to the top and enjoying every minute (Inma Alvarez) **December 13th 2023**

Memory and spending time outdoors (Jitka Vseteckova & Ellie Broad) **January 24th 2024**

Anything but being sedentary (Declan Ryan) **February 21st 2024**

Life, thriving, not just surviving (Marina Postletwaite-Bowler & Lynne Watson) **March 13th 2024**

Ways to eat well and stay well (Sinead Eccles) **April 17th 2024**

Making friends in blue and green spaces (Grainne O'Connor & Yoseph Araya) **May 22nd 2024**

Culture in language learning for older adults (Natalia Balyasnikova) **June 19th 2024**

Delivering inclusive health services for ethnic minority older people (Rohini Sharma Joshi) **July 10th 2024**

Ageing Well series of Public Talks

“Being mindful of eating well, hydration, physical activity, learning new things and social connections can delay the decline caused by ageing.

Come and join us for the series of public talks with the title “Ageing Well”



Dr. Jitka Vseteckova
Senior Lecturer, Health and Social Care



Integrated Care Northamptonshire



Leadership
Centre



Connected



Buckinghamshire
Health & Social
Care Academy



Public Health
Agency



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE 'AGEING WELL PUBLIC TALK' SERIES

