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Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) in menopause: Exploring the relationship between breast cancer risk factors and patterns of use amongst women in Queensland

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Background: The use of menopausal hormone replacement therapy in Australia declined by 55% from 2001 to 2005 following the publication of the Women's Health Initiative trial findings, which highlighted an increased risk of breast cancer. In 2010, an estimated 539 cancers in Australia were attributable to menopausal hormone therapy, 453 breasts (3.4%), 67 endometrial (3.1%) and 19 ovarian cancers (1.6%). It was further estimated that if 25% less women used hormone therapy 141 cancers would be prevented and the sole use of estrogen only products would prevent 240 cancers.

Aim: To explore the relationship between the use of menopausal hormone therapy and pre-existing non-modifiable breast cancer risk factors; personal or family history, early menarche or low parity. It was based on analysis of questionnaire data collected by the BreastScreen Queensland programme.

Results: A positive personal history of breast cancer did not significantly influence the use of HRT, OR 1.117 (95% CI, 0.8945–1.3930), $p=0.3274$. However, women with a positive family history of breast cancer were less likely to have used any HRT compared to those with no family history, OR 0.8528 (95% CI, 0.7635–0.9526), $p=0.00478$. No significant difference in HRT use was noted between mothers and non-mothers, OR 1.101 (95% CI, 0.9702–1.2490), $p=0.1360$.

Conclusion: Of the examined non-modifiable breast cancer risk factors, only a family history influenced the use of HRT. The pre-existence of non-modifiable breast cancer risk factors has a minimal effect on the pattern of HRT use amongst women in Queensland.

Biography

Godfrey Habil Mudhune is an Epidemiologist, Pharmacist and Certified Pharmaco-vigilance Professional. He has completed his Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) from the University of Nairobi and postgraduate studies at James Lind Institute, Singapore and the Western Sydney University, Australia. He is a Researcher at the Western Sydney University's Translational Health Research Institute and an independent research consultant in several projects. His research interests are in cancer epidemiology and pharmacoepidemiology.

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