

## Empower - Menopause and Cancer Survivorship Pathway

The following information is a reply from Dr Deirdre Lundy to ARC Cancer Support Centres in response to several questions from participants in Group 2 pertaining to **Brain Fog, Menopause, and Increased risk of Dementia/Alzheimer's**

Surveys that are floating around social media are not proof of a connection between brain function/ HRT generally/ testosterone etc. They tend to be surveys done amongst certain Dr's own patients. The world authority on brain and hormones is **Prof Pauline Maki**, please watch these two videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-R1LK0Xz8Pc> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-PdGxun-MA>

Dr Maki's actual research (as opposed to surveys noted on social media) reassures us that while **brain fog in menopause is REAL, it is not permanent and usually resolves as we age.**

**Flushes** are integral to brain function - the more we control the flushes the better we sleep and the better the brain function.

**VERBAL memory** IS linked to menopause - and HRT should improve that... but HRT use does not directly improve all cognitive ability directly - it is key though as HRT use may help-

- If we get frequent flushes and poor sleep, cognitive ability is reduced, HRT will help there
- Depression and low mood also affect brain function so HRT may help there too

HRT use in women who do not get flushes, cognitive ability is NOT improved by HRT use, usually dementia is not linked to typical menopause and HRT has not been found beneficial to preventing dementia - but there may be some protection in people with premature menopause? More studies are needed.

Family history of early **dementia** is a separate issue and much more serious. **Professor Flicker** from Australia did a nice talk on dementia during the recent European Menopause Conference Meeting. He said:

- Our brains are like a bank- you need to deposit loads of information in there while you can so as you age or get sick - both of which cause 'withdrawals' from the bank, and we lose bits of the info in there, there's still lots left over! So - continue to learn new things throughout your life
- Being physically active ( 7-10 hrs / week) seems to be protective as does controlling high blood pressure and diabetes
- Not smoking- smoking is strongly linked to dementia and the brain can recover when we stop
- Avoiding contact sports
- Managing hearing loss

HRT has NO benefit in female dementia rates generally, but this speaker DID say that there is evidence that people with APOE4 gene have better alzheimer blood tests when they use HRT but there's no trial data to say HRT would protect or delay - more work needed.