

Empowering Perimenopause: Breaking the Silence, Reshaping the Narrative, and Driving the Change

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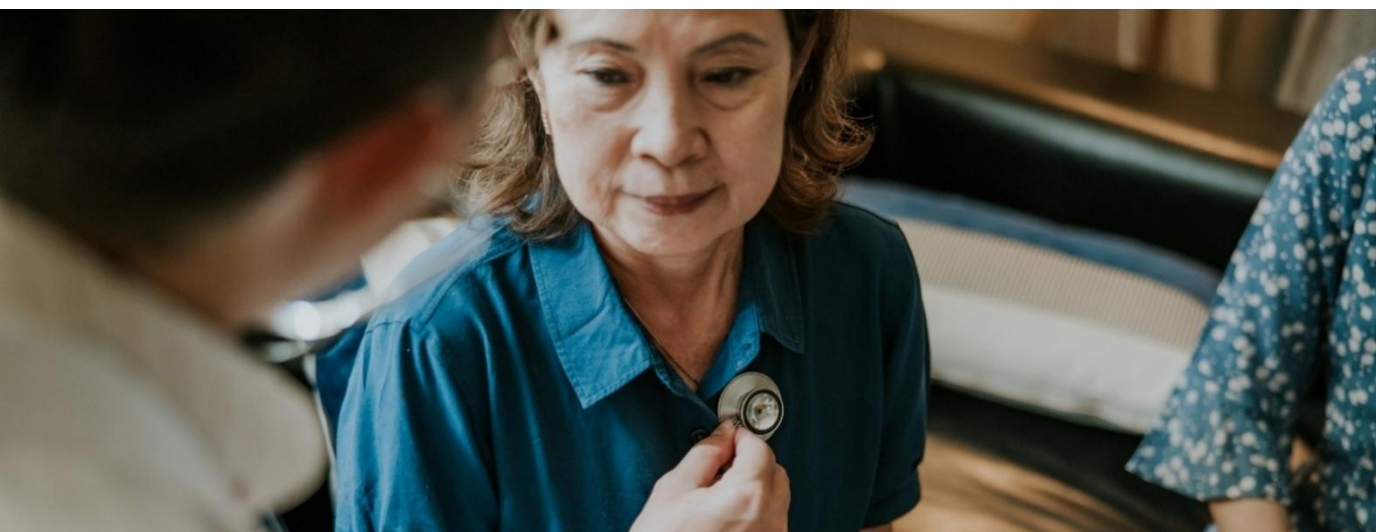
The Introduction:

The Current Conversation on Perimenopause

Perimenopause is the transitional phase that begins during a woman's mid-life when early signs of hormonal changes, such as irregular menstrual cycles, first appear and continue until one year after a final menstrual period¹. For decades, perimenopause has been a hushed topic. Conversations about women's health, especially those concerning aging and hormonal changes, were often confined to doctor's offices or whispered among close friends. The symptoms of perimenopause, from hot flashes and night sweats to brain fog, mood swings, insomnia, and fatigue, were endured quietly with little public acknowledgment or support.

But today, the narrative is shifting and the conversation is getting louder. Women are reclaiming their stories and speaking openly about their experiences. Social media has become a powerful platform for this movement with influencers and celebrities leading the charge. Public figures like Michelle Obama, Gwyneth Paltrow, Naomi Watts, and Halle Berry have shared their personal journeys, breaking taboos and encouraging others to do the same^{2,3,4,5}. Campaigns, like Queen Latifah's partnership with WeightWatchers have brought menopause into mainstream wellness discussions.

This societal shift presents a unique opportunity for key stakeholders (including patients, physicians, and politicians). The stigma is lifting, and the iron is hot—pun intended—for meaningful change in how society talks about, treats, and supports women through perimenopause.



The Paradigm Shift:

Attitudes Towards Perimenopause Are Changing

Perimenopause is not just having a moment. It's becoming a movement, as shifting attitudes are fueled by greater awareness and a rising demand for better care. As the conversation evolves, it is important to recognize that not all women view perimenopause the same way. Recent evidence suggests that generational differences play a significant role in shaping attitudes and expectations. Specifically, women over 60 tend to view perimenopause as a natural life transition that is to be accepted and endured (vs. a medical condition that deserves attention). In a September 2025 Healogix pulse survey conducted amongst 250 women aged 40 and older, 31% of women in the 40-59 age group agree with "perimenopause is a normal part of life that doesn't require medical intervention" compared to 44% of women aged 60+.⁶

Recent evidence suggests that 80% of millennial women have already begun researching and learning about menopause to better understand how it will affect them, while less than a third of Gen X women indicated having a robust understanding of their symptoms and treatment options when their symptoms began.⁷

For those of the older generations, perimenopause was not discussed openly and medical intervention was rarely considered. Throughout the 1990s, treatment options beyond Hormone Replacement Therapy (discussed below) were limited, causing countless women to experience perimenopause with minimal medical support. Their approach tends to be more stoic, shaped by cultural norms that discouraged vulnerability and prioritized resilience.

Conversely, women in their 40s and 50s, many currently navigating perimenopause, are more likely to "medicalize" the experience. They tend to seek information, assess their options, and advocate for treatments that improve quality of life. Younger generations are even more empowered to challenge outdated norms and push for better care, viewing perimenopause through a holistic lens that includes its impact on mental health, relationships, and work life.⁷

This shift reflects broader societal changes: increased access to health information, greater emphasis on wellness, and a growing rejection of gendered ageism. It also underscores the need for healthcare systems to adapt to the evolving expectations of midlife women.

The Generational Divide: Views on Hormone Replacement Therapy

One of the most contentious topics in perimenopause care is hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The divide between generations on this issue is stark and rooted in the legacy of the 2002 Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study.

The WHI study linked HRT to increased risks of stroke, blood clots, and breast cancer, prompting a dramatic decline in its use. Millions of women were taken off HRT overnight, and the treatment was widely vilified⁸. However, subsequent analyses have revealed significant flaws in the study's design and interpretation. The average age of participants was 63—well beyond the typical age for starting HRT—and the study used a one-size-fits-all approach that didn't account for different formulations or delivery methods.

In the previously mentioned Healogix pulse survey from September, both age groups showed a similar level of familiarity with HRT. However, more women aged 40-59 believe HRT to be safe compared to women aged 60+ (67% vs. 51%). There is also a notable difference in the belief that HRT is effective at managing symptoms.⁶

Women in their 40s and 50s are increasingly open to HRT while older women, many of whom were influenced by the WHI study, remain skeptical. Their caution is understandable, but it also highlights the importance of individualized care and informed decision-making.

In addition to HRT, a growing number of non-hormonal therapies are gaining traction. These include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) for managing mood and vasomotor symptoms, neurokinin receptor antagonists—such as those developed by Astellas and Bayer for hot flashes—and lifestyle-based interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), acupuncture, and dietary supplements. These options are especially relevant for women who cannot or choose not to use hormones, and they reflect a broader shift toward personalized, inclusive care.

The conversation around perimenopause treatments must evolve to reflect current science and empower women to choose what's right for them individually.



The Call to Action: Pharma's Role in Advocacy and Change

Pharmaceutical companies are sitting on a goldmine with an untapped opportunity to support millions of women navigating perimenopause and menopause. While HRT has been available for decades, its reputation was impacted by the WHI study, and many women were left without trusted options. Today, the landscape is shifting. Women are now seeking solutions. They are more informed and empowered, and willing to engage with prescription therapies that align with their needs.

Recent actions by pharmaceutical leaders like Pfizer and Teva reflect a renewed commitment to supporting women through perimenopause. Both companies have demonstrated a focus on quality, safety, and responsiveness—taking steps to improve labeling, packaging, and clinical support for their hormonal therapies^{10,11}. These efforts signal that major players are not only re-engaging with this space but are also listening to the evolving needs of women.

Pharma must move beyond maintaining existing treatments and continue to innovate next-generation therapies, such as safely tested, low-dose testosterone options for women—a promising avenue for addressing symptoms like low libido, fatigue, and cognitive changes. With no FDA-approved testosterone treatments specifically for women, the need is clear and the opportunity is significant¹².

The demand is there and the market is ready. Pharma can help lead a cultural and clinical shift by championing research, advancing education, and improving access. These companies have the resources, the reach, and the responsibility to drive systemic change, and to do so profitably.

The Conclusion:

Transforming Perimenopause from Silence to Strength

Perimenopause is no longer a quiet chapter in a woman's life. What was once whispered is now being spoken aloud, shared widely, and increasingly understood. Women across generations are challenging outdated norms and advocating for better care. Particularly, Gen X and Millennials are embracing a more informed, empowered approach to midlife health.

This transformation is not just cultural. It is clinical, commercial, and deeply personal. The science is evolving, the treatment landscape is expanding, and the demand for solutions is growing. Pharma, healthcare providers, and policymakers have a rare opportunity to meet women where they are: informed, vocal, and ready to take control of their health.

To truly support women through perimenopause, we must move beyond stigma and silence. We must invest in education, innovation, and access. Most importantly, we must listen to the symptoms, the stories, and the shifting expectations of midlife women. The future of perimenopause care is not just about managing symptoms; it is about delivering personalized holistic care. It is about rewriting the narrative and that next chapter is already underway.

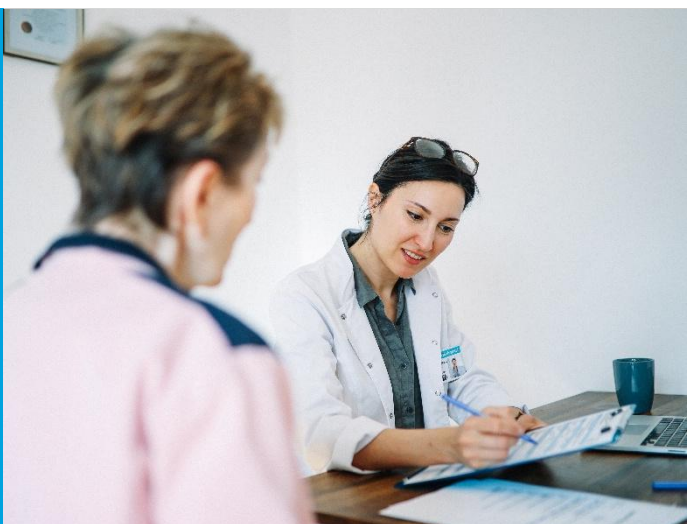
About Healogix

A global marketing research-based consultancy that helps leading and emerging pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies achieve successful product development and commercial clarity.

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