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Diary of a menopause educator

Trudi Roscouet looks at what's been happening in her part of the world, around The Channel Islands.

I thought it would be fun to look back over the last few months and see what has happened in the menopause world in the various jurisdictions.

In January I returned to Gibraltar to launch the Menopause Forum. This was very exciting as I started collaborating with Dr April Nunn, who is a GP specialising in womens health and runs her own private clinic.

- Gibraltar heard from Trudi as to why menopause matters when she launched The Menopause Forum earlier in the year.





We had spoken in some detail over Messenger so it was great to meet and initiate the event one evening, even in the pouring rain! We had over forty ladies at our launch, presenting and educating and presenting them about medical and lifestyle issues. We also ran a corporate breakfast, kindly sponsored by Lottoland, Sovereign Gibraltar and Kleinwort Hambros, where I presented my talk *Why Menopause Matters* to a packed room of HR associates and directors.

During my stay, I made another guest TV appearance on GBC's 'The Hub', that's the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation. It allowed both myself and April to publicise the importance of educating not only women, but the stress menopause can bring to marriages and families as well.

Before I returned to the cold, I stopped off in Spain, my second home, to plan my first ever Menopause Reset and Restore Retreat for June. Again in collaboration with a local Jersey doctor, Dr Juan Melendez who specialises in brain health and cognitive function. We will be combining four days of lifestyle and practical health set in the beautiful Andalusian hills.

Getting down to business

Corporate training started early this year, with trips to Guernsey and the launch of my Welcome Pack. It seemed important for me to leave my mark after talking about 'The Signs Symptoms and Solutions' of the menopause so I have created a pack of organic sanitary products, copies of Menopause Matters magazine (of course!) and the Bookmark, which can be left in rest rooms or kitchens so women can easily pick one up and track their symptoms.

I have also decided to go back to studying after many years break! So, I started my Public Health and Wellbeing Improvement diploma as well as completing the International Menopause Society's IMPART course and qualifying as a Menopause Wellbeing practitioner.

I was also being asked by charities and small businesses to be able to provide training, where of course money is an issue. So, I decided to run a public course, initially in Jersey, called Menopause4Managers. There were ten attendees from different charities and the feedback was amazing. By helping charities write a policy, or in one case, set up a monthly forum for homeless →





women to help them understand how they are feeling together with other issues going on in their life, is a personal mission for me.

Media

We then had the issue of a shortfall of Utrogestan; the media called me straight away to find out why this was happening (yet again!) Interviews with our local ITV and radio followed; together with emails to and from the UK with Carolyn Harris MP's office to work out whether this was a short or long-term issue. Interestingly, Guernsey was affected more so than Jersey but I'm pleased to report it was only a short-term issue.

This year has also seen the launch of a series of men's physical and mental health lectures with Dr Ed Rainbow, combining the menopause with the andropause.

In March, *Menopause Matters* featured Helen Tomlinson, as the new Menopause champion appointed by the Government and I had the privilege of meeting with her in April, to discuss the difficulties that we face within our own local governments as well as the various employment sectors that the islands cover.

On International Womens Day 2023 I was awarded with the Soroptimist Inspirational Woman of the Year Award for my work in the menopause space. I was very touched and slightly embarrassed as I have chosen to follow my passion and lead a campaign, which I hope would ease women from struggling with debilitating symptoms, as well as educating both professionals and men.

Working with the Menopause Mandate

The ultimate step in my last few months, was to be invited to join the Menopause Mandate to celebrate its first year birthday party at the House of Commons by Carolyn Harris, MP. The Mandate is a group of professional women who have joined together to provide a voice for the women in the UK in respect of all matters menopause.

Mariella Frostrup, the leader of the Mandate, opened the event with a resume of their achievements. On April 1st the launch of the HRT prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC) meaning that a woman can now receive a year's worth of HRT for the cost of two prescriptions (£19.30). This has been an amazing success with over



• Trudi with MP Carolyn Harris (left) and fellow campaigner, Penny Lancaster (right) celebrating The Menopause Mandate's first birthday at the House of Commons.



• The work goes on...

37,700 women already downloading their PPC. My personal campaign will try to bring a similar discount in the offshore territories. Although our prescriptions are free, we have to revisit the doctor, within every 3 months at a cost of £52.00. Therefore, our actual cost can be up to £208.00! Given that some doctors are still not recognising the symptoms, and stating bloods are 'normal' this can compound a woman's anxiety which may already be through the roof!

In relation to education, the Mandate also announced that in partnership with a commercial sponsor, they have made 12 short films directed at healthcare professionals featuring pharmacist, Thorrun Govind and BMS accredited menopause specialist and trainer Dr Juliet Balfour. These are free for all GPs, pharmacists and their teams. Some of the subjects covered include the diagnosis of perimenopause and menopause, the correct prescribing of HRT, the truth about testosterone, how the HRT PPC works, advice for those with breast cancer and what lifestyle advice can be offered. Many of these topics and others are already covered as free resources from the British Menopause Society in the form of videos on BMS TV, Tools for Clinicians and fact sheets, and should be the first place to go, but new resources are always welcome.

There was also an announcement that in conjunction with the British Standards Institution, they are launching BS 30416 Menstruation, Menstrual Health and Menopause in the workplace. This will be used as a toolkit for organisations to build a menstrual health and menopause-inclusive work environment.

It aims to benefit employees by providing adjustments and creating a supportive open culture, and also employers, by improving the engagement and retention of staff.

The Mandate's goals remain the same - education for all and affordable and accessible treatment, whether that be HRT or other options. From my personal perspective I want to work with governments of Jersey, Guernsey, Isle Of Man and Gibraltar to review some of their internal procedures such as the condition of returning to the doctor every 3 months before HRT can be prescribed to women.

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I would also like to see well women checks for the over 45s. I have created checks with doctors in Jersey, Gibraltar and hopefully Guernsey for private companies who can now invest in their female employees practically. By combining forces with GPs, I can offer a 90-minute check looking at all angles of womens health, whether that be contraceptive, HRT and lifestyle including weight loss, stress reduction and how sleep and exercise can play a huge part in effecting our physical and mental health.





- A familiar phrase for so many women when entering perimenopause.

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When I look back I realise my achievements, but so much work has yet to be done and to make education affordable for all associations, small and large. Let's see what the next few months bring.

If your business would like corporate training or advice on any of the above courses, please feel free to contact Trudi at trudi@vitality40plus.com or on 07797799513.



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