

HRT prescribing patterns and financial cost to patients



Dr Louise Newson

Bsc (Hons) MBChB (Hons) MRCP FRCGP

Dr Rebecca Lewis

MBBS FRCA DRCOG MRCGP

Lucy Chatwin

Newson Heath Menopause Society Director

Introduction

The benefits of HRT outweigh the risks for most women (NICE guidelines NG23, 2019) and women usually require this treatment for several years to minimise symptoms and provide benefits to bone and cardiovascular health. Treatment can involve

up to 4 different medications, and it is common prescribing practice to issue medication for 3 months use per prescription. HRT currently has a standard prescription charge in England and there is no prescription charge in Wales and Scotland.

Methods

An online survey was created and the link was shared through various social media channels. Questions included asking about whether HRT

was on a NHS repeat prescription, the length of time the prescription lasted for, and how much the respondents thought they spent on HRT each year.

Results

Out of 1,292 responses

OVER 97% had their HRT supplied by their NHS GP on the NHS

Although the majority had their HRT on repeat prescriptions, **20% DID NOT**

The length of time prescriptions lasted for was variable but the majority was

3 MONTHS OR LESS

LESS THAN 10%

had prescriptions that lasted six months or more

Financial cost to patients

29% of respondents did not have to pay for their prescriptions

12% estimated they spent **£10-£50** a year

59% were having to pay **£51-£150** a year

Conclusion

The perimenopause and menopause is a hormone deficiency and HRT is an effective long term treatment that requires multiple prescriptions, usually for many years. For this reason, it is important that HRT is prescribed on a repeat prescription to minimise unnecessary cost and inconvenience to the patient.

While HRT itself is relatively cheap for the NHS, frequent prescription charges for the patient add up when HRT is prescribed in amounts that last 3 months or less. Whenever it is clinically appropriate, HRT prescriptions should last 6-12 months to reduce the cost to patients to ease access to a cheap, safe and effective treatment for the perimenopause and menopause.

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