

BUSINESS AND PEOPLE BUILDERS

Marketing and merchandising for menopause

1
CPD CREDIT

Menopause is a natural phase of life that women usually experience in their late 40s or early 50s. A range of symptoms is associated with menopause and women's experiences vary widely. It's important not to stereotype or generalise where menopause is concerned. However, pharmacy can play a key role in meeting the diverse needs of women in menopause through a sensitive approach to providing credible information, convenient product selection and relevant services.



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Most women reach menopause between the ages of 45 and 55, with the average at 51. Early menopause can occur between the ages of 41 and 45, with about one per cent of women aged under 40 experiencing menopause¹. Women may also undergo surgical menopause, where their ovaries have been removed, which can happen at any age. It's important not to stereotype or generalise when dealing with women in menopause.

In the 2011 Australian Census, the population of women in the 45 to 54 age group was about 1.5 million². Baby-boomer women, born between 1946 and 1964, fall into the latter half of the current menopausal age range, while generation X women make up the younger portion of this group. The fertility rate in Australia, as calculated in the same Census was 1.9 and represents the number of births per woman³. Women in this age range may have children at home, or they may be grandparents. As grandparents often play a key role in the care of grandchildren, many women in this age range will have child care responsibilities.

Between 1881 and 1890, female life expectancy at birth was 50.8 years⁴, which coincides with the average age of onset of menopause. It was not until after World War II that life expectancy passed 70 years. This was when baby boomers were born. So, traditionally, menopause was either not experienced at all by women, or when it was, it was seen as the final stage of life. This may have engendered many of the negative stereotypes of menopause. In the 2011 Census, life expectancy at birth for Australian females was 84.1 years and residual life expectancy for those who reach 65 was 22 years, leading to their life expectancy being 87 years⁵. So, far from being at the end of life, those women who now transition through menopause have a good chance of living a further 30 years

Learning objectives:

After completing this CPD activity pharmacists should be able to:

Identify women in the menopause target group and outline their expectations from your business.

Plan to deliver products and services to menopausal women

Pharmacist competencies addressed: 1.3, 3.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Accreditation number: A1404RP2

or so. They therefore expect to remain healthy and active through menopause and beyond.

In the Australian economy, it is estimated that women control 90¢ in every dollar of spending⁶. Women of the baby boomer generation are said to be the “healthiest, wealthiest and most active generation of women in history”⁷. As consumers, their expectations are high. They will demand good service, high quality and reasonable value for money. This age group has undergone a role change from that of a traditional homemaker to putting priority on purchases that represent security, convenience and luxury⁸.

Pharmacy can play a key role in providing these attributes of security, convenience and luxury by being sensitive to the needs of this customer segment. A range of health concerns may accompany menopause and these will vary between women. Some are minor and others more serious, but pharmacists are well placed to support women through these changes by providing credible information, relevant advice and evidence-based solutions for symptomatic relief of menopause-related conditions.

These include menstrual cycle changes and irregular bleeding, hot flushes, sweats, incontinence or increased urinary frequency, vaginal dryness, mood changes, weight changes, and aches and pains.

Providing security

Menopause is still something of a taboo topic and, especially in its early stages, women may experience some of these symptoms without being aware that they are related to menopause. Women may feel embarrassed by the changes in their body and symptoms such as bladder leakage, vaginal dryness or excessive sweating.

Sometimes just the reassurance that these symptoms are normal and temporary will be extremely helpful. In the US, Kimberley-Clark, makers of Poise, launched a comedy road show on the topic of menopause, aimed at breaking down some of the barriers to talking about this normal life phase⁹. They have also begun marketing a line of hygiene products directed specifically at women in menopause. This makes good sense, as given their vitality and longevity, those going through menopause do not want to be treated as ‘old women’ and be offered only products and services commonly aimed at the older population.

Providing additional information to increase awareness of simple measures to manage these symptoms will also be positive. For example, making women aware that they can wear a light incontinence pad for occasional bladder leakage, which may make them feel more secure. Pharmacy staff can advise on lubricant products or higher strength antiperspirants and absorbent powders that women who are experiencing these symptoms for the first time may not be aware of.

Complementary medicines may also appeal to this demographic group and they may be willing to try alternative and sometimes untested therapies to treat the range of symptoms they experience during menopause. Pharmacists have an important role to play in offering credible advice and evidence-based information to assist women to confidently make these choices.

Customers should feel secure asking their pharmacist for advice in these areas and it's important to provide a comfortable and confidential environment for these discussions to take place. It's also important to ensure that your staff members are well informed about menopausal symptoms and how they can assist customers in a sensitive way.

Providing luxury

This is also a time when women may begin to be more concerned about ageing skin and other beauty matters. They may wish to make changes to the beauty regimes that they have followed in their younger years to better suit their changing skin, hair and nails. Greying of the hair may also be a concern and women may seek to colour their hair to cover grey, even if they

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▶ have not used hair colour before. Those with additional disposable income may see beauty products and treatments as a way of indulging their desire for luxury. They may wish to try luxury brands or more exclusive product ranges. Even at lower price points, beauty and fragrance offer the perception of affordable luxury as they are seen as doing 'something for me'. Many pharmacies have moved away from stocking top line skin care and fragrance brands, in the face of competition from department stores. However, there is still a role for pharmacy to play in skin care and beauty as part of an overall health and wellness offering. Some pharmacies have embraced this market, offering individually compounded skin care products for anti-ageing and other skin concerns and have formed close associations with cosmetic physicians. Other pharmacies have in-house beauty rooms and offer treatments such as facials or nail care. They may stock

Australian and international brands that are hard to source elsewhere, thus offering a level of exclusivity to consumers. These offerings are ideally suited to this demographic.

Providing convenience

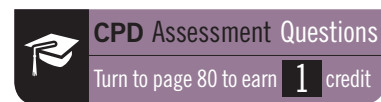
Pharmacies can fulfil the need for convenience in a variety of ways. The location and opening hours of pharmacies can offer the advantage of convenience over some other retailers. Another aspect of convenience is acting as a one-stop shop for health related products and advice. The grandmother caring for her grandchild will find it convenient to fill her HRT prescription and buy nappies at the same time. This also gives pharmacy staff the opportunity to introduce women to other services the store provides given the strong desire of this group to maintain wellness. Pharmacies also offer convenience by being a readily accessible source of credible health information, which may be sufficient for some

customers and remove the need to visit their doctor for simple symptom relief. The pharmacist can, of course, provide a referral to a medical practitioner where this is required. One example of this is in the weight loss area, where pharmacies are well placed to offer a comprehensive service, with both products and advice. Regular follow-up can be made in a convenient setting, often without the need to make an appointment. Think about how you can co-locate or cross-promote products that may be relevant to this demographic group to provide greater convenience for the customer and increase sales for the pharmacy. Taking a wider view of what the needs of this group might be will help you to better fulfil their expectations through your product and service offering. Examples of menopause-relevant OTC product segments include: incontinence pads, sanitary products, vaginal lubricants and

antiperspirants (security); simple analgesia, weight-loss products, complimentary medicines, and baby care (convenience); skin care, cosmetics, hair care, and fragrance (luxury). ^{RP}

References

- 1 http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Menopause_premature_early_menopause
- 2 http://lmap.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/EmploymentData_PopulationbyAgeGroup
- 3 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/AE3CAF747F4751CDCA2579CF000F9ABC?OpenDocument>
- 4 <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features10Mar+2011>
- 5 <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4125.0main+features3110Jan%202013>
- 6 http://www.afr.com/p/opinion/ignore_the_female_consumer_at_your_SoFubNwUQXMMzUEGoKpaLI
- 7 <http://www.she-economy.com/report/marketing-to-women-quick-facts>
- 8 <http://www.she-economy.com/report/marketing-to-women-quick-facts>
- 9 <http://adage.com/article/adages/poise-launches-comedy-tour-menopause/237327/>



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A recent Ernst & Young Customer Experience survey targeted at service businesses suggests that Australian businesses are losing \$720 per negative customer experience. Just about every retail business could do with some improvement, or 'drops the ball' occasionally, but how do you minimise the risk and associated loss?

Martin Lindstrom is one of more interesting branding experts around today. Recently, he has undertaken a series of 'Main Street Makeovers' through the *Today Show* in the US. As a retail consultant these TV segments are both interesting and frustrating to watch, as he takes different stores in fairly extreme cases of distress and works with them to turn their businesses around. They are interesting because he is applying to fantastic effect basic retailing methodologies, such as brand message uniqueness and consistency, good store layout and appeal, a developed marketing and promotions plan and excellent customer service. But the segments are also frustrating to watch because you can so easily apply the situations shown in these

stores to any number of retail pharmacies in Australia – pharmacies that don't know what to prioritise, which direction to turn or how to turn around their retail fortunes. With the recent capping of claimable services and another round of PBS price cuts, there is no better time than now to do something. The good news is that, just as in these segments, clear steps can be taken, staff can be enthused and a direction can be reintroduced to your store to turn it around. Mr Lindstrom outlines some KPIs he uses in reference to stores, and specifically refers to the 'Rules of 5' for fairly conventional retailers. These KPIs are about building customer engagement and sales and include:

1. How many times per week do

Learning objectives:

At the completion of this activity the pharmacist should be able to:

- Identify examples of KPIs for customer engagement and sales.
- Describe how in-store experiences can impact customer behaviour.
- Identify actions and priorities for the team to improve the customer experience.

Pharmacist competencies addressed: 3.1, 3.2

Accreditation number: A1404RP4

your customers refer back to your window display? If the answer is fewer than five times, there's an issue.

2. How much time does your customer spend in your store? If this works out at less than five minutes, there's a problem.
3. Are your customers recommending

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Natural therapies for menopause

Accreditation number: A1404RP1 **1** Credit

This activity has been accredited for 0.5 hr of Group One CPD (0.5 CPD Credit) that may be converted to 1 Group Two CPD Credit upon successful completion of the below assessment for inclusion on an individual pharmacist's CPD Record.

The International Menopause Society defines natural menopause as the permanent cessation of menstruation resulting from the loss of ovarian follicular activity. The final menstrual period can only be recognised with certainty after 12 consecutive months of amenorrhoea. Menopause can also be induced by surgical removal of the ovaries with or without hysterectomy or following damage caused by chemotherapy or radiation.

1. Which of the following statements about menopause is correct?

- A) The symptoms of menopause include hot flushes, sleep disturbance, irritability and headache.
- B) The final menstrual period is identified by six months of continual amenorrhoea.
- C) The symptoms of menopause commence once the final menstrual period is identified.
- D) The primary health concern reported by menopausal women is osteoporosis.

2. Which of the following statements about phytoestrogens is correct?

- A) Phytoestrogens are steroidal compounds commonly found in animal products.
- B) Isoflavones are commonly found in grains such as flaxseed.
- C) Phytoestrogens are converted in the gut to compounds that are structurally similar to oestradiol.
- D) Isoflavones are metabolised by gut bacteria to equol, which is then hydrolysed to daidzein.

3. Analysis of scientific data involving soy isoflavones for menopausal symptoms found:

- A) They are no better than placebo for hot flushes.
- B) They may reduce the frequency of hot flushes.
- C) They may reduce the severity of hot flushes.
- D) There is a small placebo effect in studies of symptomatic treatment for menopause.

4. In general, research into popular alternative treatments for menopausal symptoms indicate:

- A) The evidence for the benefit of black cohosh is definitive.
- B) Red clover is superior to placebo for hot flushes.
- C) Wild yam cream is no more effective than placebo.
- D) Maritime pine bark is no more effective than placebo.

5. Research into popular alternative treatments for menopausal symptoms indicate:

- A) Soy isoflavones and maritime pine bark are effective for sleep disturbance.
- B) Soy isoflavones may be effective for vaginal dryness.
- C) Soy isoflavones plus lignans may protect against vaginal atrophy and improve quality of life.
- D) All of the above.

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1. The average age that a woman reaches menopause in Australia is:

- A) 41.
- B) 51.
- C) 61.
- D) 71.

2. Between 1890 and 2011 life expectancy at birth for Australian females increased by:

- A) 33.3 years.
- B) 22 years.
- C) 50.1 years.
- D) 2.9 years.

3. Attributes important to customers in the baby boomer age group are:

- A) Security.
- B) Convenience.
- C) Luxury.
- D) All of the above.

4. Pharmacists can assist to meet the needs of this demographic by:

- A) Providing credible information and evidence-based advice.
- B) Reassuring women that their symptoms are normal and temporary.
- C) Referring women to their GP or other health services as required.
- D) All of the above.

5. It is estimated that in the Australian economy women's control of spending is:

- A) 80%.
- B) 85%.
- C) 90%.
- D) 100%.

ENJOYED THIS TOPIC?

Additional resources for healthcare professionals:

- National Prescribing Service www.nps.org.au.
- Australian Menopause Society – www.menopause.org.au.
- Jean Hailes organisation – www.jeanhailes.org.au.
- Dedicated support groups and allied health professionals.
- www.managingmenopause.org.au.

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