

# It's more than a hot flush!

A presentation on the menopause delivered by  
Danielle Adams together with Yona and Danni Lunsky  
Radiant CPD session

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# Introducing the presenters

## Danielle Adams (in person)

Doctoral Researcher at University of Warwick studying the reduction of psychotropic medicines in people with learning disabilities, Mental Health Pharmacist, Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists Quality Network for Learning Disability Accreditation and Advisory Committee, co author of several of the MindEd elearning STOMP modules and is a member of the GOLD committee at BILD.



# Introducing the presenters

**Professor Yona Lunsky** (on a video recording from Canada)

Psychologist, Professor in the faculty of medicine at University of Toronto, has studied health and intellectual disability for 25 years. Leads a research programme called h-cardd. ([www.hcardd.ca](http://www.hcardd.ca)). Sister to Danni and they are always learning from each other.

**Danni Lunsky** (on a video recording from Canada)

Lives in Toronto and enjoys getting outdoors, singing and spending time with her sister. Likes to help people including helping others to understand more about disabilities



# What am I going to be talking about?

The impact of the perimenopause and the menopause on the lives of women with learning disabilities as they age.

Appreciating how this stage in women's lives can effect physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Thinking about these issues in health services and in social care.

# Introduction

Why am I giving this presentation?

50 year old female, AB, repeatedly removed clothing.

Behaviour was considered challenging by carers and GP.

GP wanted to initiate risperidone

Care manager, a woman in her 50s, suggested AB, was probably having hot flushes and insisted that hormone levels were taken prior to prescribing risperidone.

Blood test confirmed AB was perimenopausal.

# Supporting women with learning disabilities across the lifespan

Puberty and adolescence

Sexual Health

Contraception

Fertility

Pregnancy

Breast Feeding

Perimenopause

Menopause

# Definitions

## Menopause

The occurrence of the last natural menstrual period

## Perimenopause

The time from the beginning of irregular periods until 12 months after your last period

## Post Menopause

One year after the last menstrual period

Symptoms can last for several years. Average age of the menopause in UK is 51. Women with Down's syndrome can reach menopause on average 5 years earlier.

# Accessing information - How do women learn about the menopause?

School science lessons, mothers and grandmothers??

Friends, online forums eg latte lounge FB page, menopause exchange

Holistic therapists, health food shops

Is there still a taboo in some social circles?

Provision of accessible information

Are women with learning disabilities and their carers accessing information about the menopause?

Are women with learning disabilities and their carers reporting symptoms?



# Effects on physical health and mental health and wellbeing – perimenopause

Hot flushes, Night sweats

Food cravings

Breast pain

Headaches – pain causing CB?

Aches and Pains

Vaginal dryness – pain

Reduced Libido

Mood Swings – anxiety, depression

Insomnia – implement sleep hygiene measures, perceived CB

Tiredness

Problems with memory and concentration (brain fog)

# Effects on physical health and mental health and wellbeing – perimenopause

Menstrual Cycle – irregular periods, heavy painful periods, missed periods

Effect on physical health- anaemia, pain at random times of the month, pain no longer controlled by usual analgesia

Effect on mental wellbeing – pain can be a cause of behaviour that challenges, inability to cope with the change of routine of regular periods, embarrassment of difficulty in managing heavy periods, predictability of pre menstrual syndrome, predictability of catamenial epilepsy, implication of a missed period

# Effects on physical health– post menopause

## Bone Health

increased risk of osteoporosis and poor bone health

risk of fragility fracture is decreased while taking HRT

Think about increased risk of fracture from lack of vitamin D, falls (tonic clonic seizures), anti convulsant medicines, long term use of SSRI antidepressants eg sertraline and PPI acid blockers eg omeprazole

Bladder and incontinence problems

Pelvic Organ Prolapse

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

# Effects on physical health and mental health and wellbeing –health screening

Cervical cancer screening ( age 25 to 64)

Breast examinations

Mammograms – 45 years and above depending which area, NHS website – age 50 to 71

<https://phescreening.blog.gov.uk/2019/12/20/learning-disabilities-breast-screening-film/>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/765594/Easy\\_guide\\_to\\_breast\\_screening.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765594/Easy_guide_to_breast_screening.pdf)

<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/information/cervical-screening/cervical-screening-learning-disability>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cervical-screening-easy-read-guide>

# Let's hear from our experts, Yona and Danni

Yona and Danni discussing the menopause

<https://share.icloud.com/photos/0d0QTFn2oV0vyH8HPbwNXvrQw>

Yona talking about her reflections as a family carer and a researcher

[https://share.icloud.com/photos/06btk8zCQk9i7sMAI6Yj-EE\\_A](https://share.icloud.com/photos/06btk8zCQk9i7sMAI6Yj-EE_A)

# How should we be addressing the issues we have discussed?

Education of all stakeholders

Person centred care and support; diagnostic overshadowing

Shared decision making and a joined up approach

Care Planning

Is medication an appropriate option? Accessing other interventions?

Advantages and Disadvantages of HRT- evidence base

Types of available HRT

Complementary Medicines – Are they appropriate?

Clinical audit and quality improvement initiatives

Developing guidance using a co production approach

# Useful Resources

- NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/treatment/>

- Clinical Knowledge summaries (part of NICE)

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/menopause/>

- Selection of menopause websites that you may find useful

[www.balance-menopause.com/balance-for-hcp/](http://www.balance-menopause.com/balance-for-hcp/)

[www.menopausedoctor.co.uk](http://www.menopausedoctor.co.uk)

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/menopause/>

[www.menopause-exchange.co.uk](http://www.menopause-exchange.co.uk)

# Easy Read Material

<https://www.easyhealth.org.uk/resources/300-keep-healthy-during-the-menopause>

<https://www.easyhealth.org.uk/resources/298-menopause>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/translations/formats/easy-read/the-menopause/menopause-overview-easy-read#:~:text=Menopause%20is%20when%20a%20woman,characteristics%20may%20also%20experience%20menopause.>

<https://www.sath.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Menopause.pdf>

<https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/for-families-and-carers/health-and-well-being/getting-older/menopause/>



# Key Take Home Messages

Consideration of the implementation of gender specific support through the ageing process

Awareness of perimenopausal and menopausal symptoms

Reflect on practice within the clinical / social care team

Assessing the education and training needs of the team, carers and women with learning disabilities regarding the perimenopause and menopause

Considering impact of these hormonal changes in women with learning disabilities over 35 years old on mental and physical health and wellbeing

Be aware of diagnostic overshadowing

Find out what is available in your local area, contact details and accessibility of local providers

Care Planning

# Thank you for listening

## Any Questions ???

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