

# Behaviors/Attitudes Towards Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) Treatment for Menopausal Women in 5 Major European Countries

S. Graham, PhD<sup>1</sup>, G. Constantine, MD<sup>2</sup>, C. Clerinx<sup>3</sup>, B. Bernick, MD<sup>1</sup>, M. Krassan<sup>1</sup>, and S. Mirkin, MD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>TherapeuticsMD, Boca Raton, FL; <sup>2</sup>EndoRheum Consultants LLC, Media, PA; <sup>3</sup>AX's Consulting SPRL, Chaumont-Gistoux, Belgium

## Introduction

- Menopausal symptoms are common and bothersome to many women, yet are often untreated
- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can treat menopausal symptoms, but HRT use significantly dropped following reports of previously unidentified risks with oral HRT: the Women's Health Initiative and the Million Women Study<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Menopause-related consultations with general practitioners (GPs) fell from 18% to 10% between 1996 and 2005<sup>3</sup>
  - More than 60% of women in 2012 managed their menopausal symptoms without healthcare professionals (HCPs), often through social support and advice from friends, family and the internet<sup>3</sup>
- Some attitudes toward HRT may be changing in favor of considering HRT
  - A 2009 survey of 720 postmenopausal Italian women found that 68% believed HRT was a good solution to menopausal symptoms<sup>4</sup>

## Objective

To assess behaviors towards treatment of symptoms associated with menopause across 5 European countries

## Methods

- A July 2014 market research survey (AX's Consulting) assessed menopausal symptoms and treatment in a nationally represented population of 2610 women in 5 major European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom)
- An Internet survey, consisting of a screening section (8 questions) and a main survey (15 questions), was given to postmenopausal women. The sample completing the full survey was equally stratified by the age groups of 45-54 yrs, 55-64 yrs, and ≥65 yrs.

## Results

- A total of 3890 postmenopausal women were screened for the survey, 2610 of these women had symptoms related to menopause, and 1401 postmenopausal women completed the full survey, answering all questions regarding treatment (Table 1)

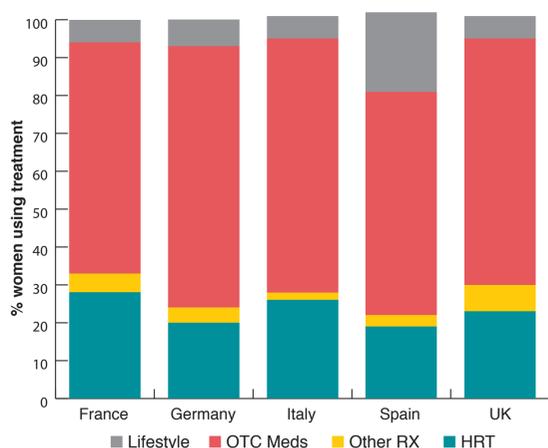
**Table 1. Disposition of survey respondents**

	France	Germany	Italy	Spain	UK
Total menopausal population screened (n=3890)	1213	1119	547	452	559
Menopausal women with symptoms related to menopause (n=2610)	727	765	383	314	421
Women completing full survey* (n=1401)	413	411	210	157	210

\*Equally stratified by age group: 45-54; 55-64; 65+

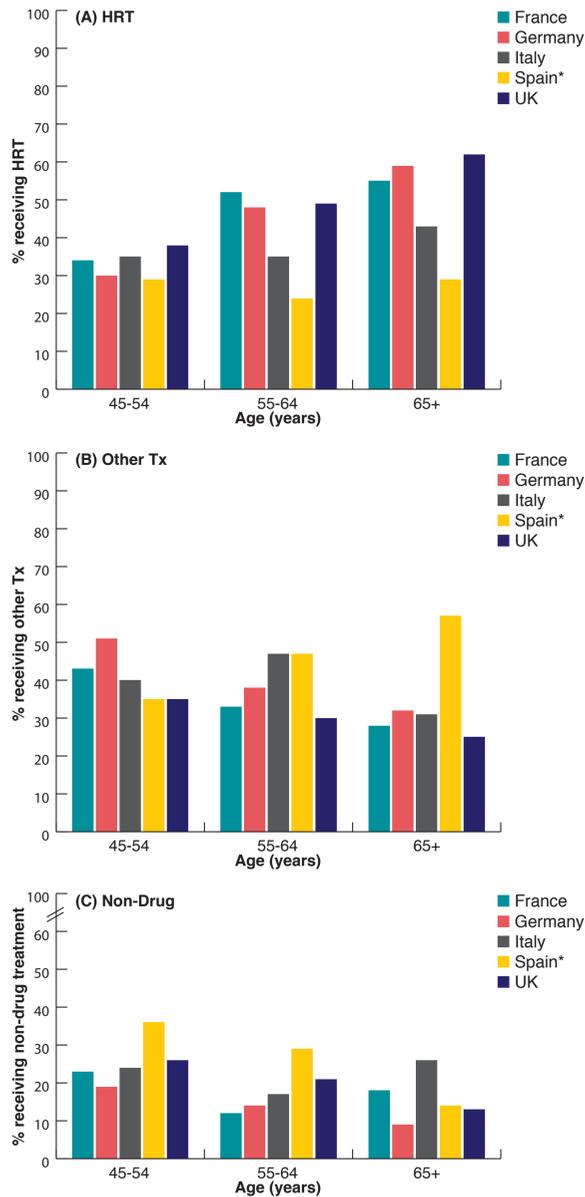
- ~70% of women reported having or have had menopausal symptoms
- 50%-55% of women took action for treating their menopausal symptoms, with approximately 75% of those taking action consulting a physician
- Of those who saw a physician, approximately 80% received either HRT or another prescription treatment in 4 countries (Germany, France, the UK and Italy; 69% in Spain)
- In Germany and Spain, prescription treatment represented ~25% of treatments and ~33% in the other countries (Figure 1)

**Figure 1. Proportion of different treatments used by women in 5 different countries**



- HRT use was highest in the UK, France and Germany and lowest in Spain
- HRT was more commonly prescribed in older women, while other drug therapies and non-drug therapies were more commonly used by younger women (Figure 2A-C)

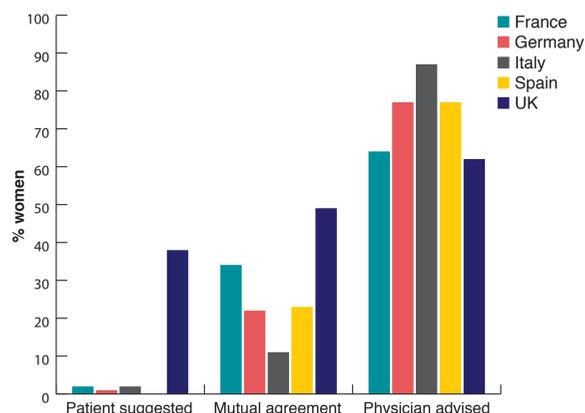
**Figure 2. Types of therapies used to treat menopausal symptoms in women of different age groups in 5 different countries**



\* >65 population underrepresented in Spain, making a comparison difficult with other countries.

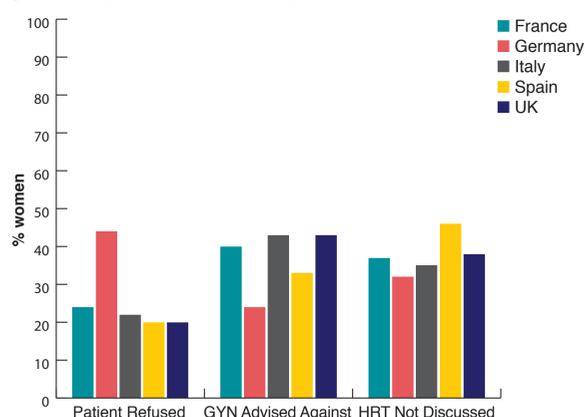
- In Germany, Spain and Italy, HRT was prescribed more at the initiative of the doctor while in France and the UK, it was more likely to be a joint decision between the physician and patient (Figure 3)

**Figure 3. Origin of HRT prescriptions for postmenopausal women in 5 countries**



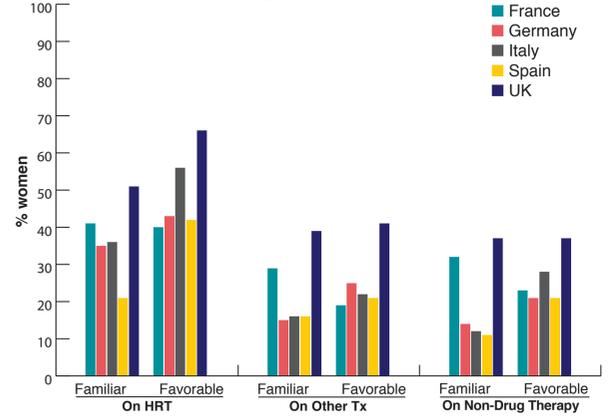
- Of women who saw a physician, many did not receive HRT because the physician advised against its use or the option was not discussed (Figure 4)
- Among German women who saw a doctor, patient refusal was a common reason for not using HRT (44% of women not taking HRT vs ~20% in other countries; Figure 4)
- In Spain, the option of HRT was more often not raised than in the other countries (Figure 4)

**Figure 4. Reported reasons why women did not receive HRT**



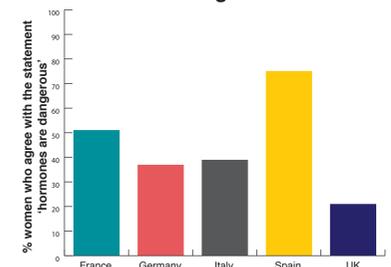
- Women were most familiar with and favorable to HRT in the UK (Figure 5)
- A significant proportion of women not taking HRT were unfavorable to HRT, particularly in Italy, France, Germany, and Spain (Figure 5)

**Figure 5. Women's attitudes (familiar with; favorable toward) regarding HRT depending on their treatment at the time of the survey**



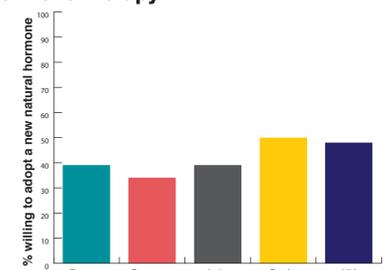
- A high proportion of women in France and Spain agreed with the statement, "hormones are dangerous," (i.e., responded with "entirely agree" or "somewhat agree" on a 5-point scale); fewer in Germany and Italy, and the least in the UK (Figure 6)

**Figure 6. Percentage of women in each country who agreed that hormones are dangerous**



- Between 40% and 50% of women in Spain, the UK and Italy were willing to accept a new therapy if their physician recommended it compared with 34% in Germany and 39% in France (Figure 7)
- The new therapy was described as: approved by national health authorities, prescribed by a physician, proven to be safe and effective, and contains hormones identical to those in a woman's body

**Figure 7. Percentage of women willing to adopt a new hormone therapy**



## Limitations

- Although a national population was sought, the population of surveyed women may not be representative of the national population in each country
- The survey did not include questions regarding some demographics or behaviors that might have affected women's experience of menopausal symptoms
- Although the sample for each country was equally stratified by age group, the low response for Spanish women over 65 reporting symptoms reduced the percentage of women in that group, making comparisons across countries for that group difficult

## Conclusions

- This survey of women in 5 European countries showed
  - Prescription HRT was only used by 25%-33% of symptomatic women
  - Younger women used non-HRT options more commonly than older women
  - For those using HRT, physicians were commonly the initiator for suggesting HRT, but for non-HRT users, physicians commonly advised against HRT or did not bring it up
  - Women in the UK were most familiar with and favorable to HRT; those in Spain, France and Germany tended to be unfavorable
  - A high proportion of women in Spain and France considered hormones to be dangerous, while women in the UK did not
  - Women's interest in a new HRT is relatively high, 34%-50%
- In summary, one-quarter to one-third of surveyed symptomatic women used HRT to treat their menopausal symptoms. Older women tended to use HRT more than younger women. Women from the UK were most familiar with and favorable to HRT. Most women using HRT were advised by a physician to initiate treatment, or came to a mutual decision with their physician. Interest in a new hormone therapy was higher than the current rate of usage.

## References

- Stagnitti M, Lefkowitz D. *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality*. 2011(November):1-9.
- Jewett PI, Gangnon RE, Trentham-Dietz A, Sprague BL. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2014;124(4):727-733.
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). 2015. <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/gid-cgwave0639/documents/menopause-final-scope2>. Accessed May 8, 2015.
- Donati S, Cotichini R, Mosconi P, et al. *Maturitas*. 2009;63(3):246-252.

## Disclosures

TherapeuticsMD supported the survey and medical writing assistance provided by Jolene Mason, PhD (Precise Publications, LLC). S.G., B.B., M.K. and S.M. are employees of TherapeuticsMD. G.C. consults to pharmaceutical companies including but not limited to TherapeuticsMD.



Presented at the 10th European Congress on Menopause and Andropause, May 20 - 22, 2015, Madrid, Spain