# Reevaluating Hormone Therapy in Menopausal Women: Debunking Myths and Emphasizing Safety



In 2002, the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) released findings from a study on hormone therapy in menopausal women, inaccurately reporting heightened risks of breast cancer, heart attacks, and strokes. This study significantly influenced medical practices, causing a drastic reduction in hormone therapy prescriptions from 112 million in 2001 to less than 32 million by 2008. Subsequent research has debunked these initial claims, showing that the risks were overstated and that hormone therapy is effective and safe for treating menopausal symptoms if initiated before age 60.

The original objective of the WHI study was to evaluate hormone therapy as a preventive measure against chronic diseases in postmenopausal women, not to assess its efficacy in managing menopausal symptoms. This misinterpretation led to a widespread cessation of hormone therapy, despite its benefits for symptoms like hot flashes and bone density. Updated analyses, like those shared by WHI researcher JoAnn E. Manson, affirm hormone therapy's appropriateness for symptom management in women under 60, counter to its preventive use for chronic conditions in older women.

Options like low-dose vaginal estrogen are advised for older women, offering relief with minimal risks. However, hormone therapy is not suitable for women with certain health histories, like estrogen-sensitive cancers. Non-hormonal alternatives are also available. Moving forward, medical guidelines and training are adapting to better reflect the current understanding of hormone therapy's safety and efficacy.