

Can Cure is the Nag Foundation's quarterly newsletter that helps create awareness about various issues related to cancer and its treatment. It is an opportunity for our members, both doctors and patients, to share their insights and testimonies with you.



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MENOPAUSE

Menopause is the period in a woman's life when her ovaries stop producing eggs. This leads to a gradual decrease in levels of the hormones estrogen and progesterone, which in turn leads to the gradual disappearance of her monthly periods. The fall in hormone levels can trigger a range of symptoms like:

Less or irregular periods
Vaginal dryness
Night sweats
Weight gain

Hot flashes
Mood swings
Insomnia
Thinning of hair and dry skin

These symptoms may continue for an average of four to five years, but they decrease in frequency and intensity.



Menopause can be either:

Premature menopause

Although most women will reach their menopause in their late forties or early fifties, for a minority of women it can happen later than that or considerably earlier. Premature menopause is one that occurs before the age of 40. Some women experience their menopause in their thirties or even their twenties, although this is uncommon.

Surgically induced menopause

A woman becomes menopausal if she has a hysterectomy and at the same time both her ovaries are removed. When this happens, the natural process of gradual decline in hormone levels described above does not happen.

Menopause marks the end of a woman's reproductive life and poses increased risk of the following:

- 1) Heart disease
- 2) Hypercholesterolemia (a condition characterized by very high levels of cholesterol in the blood)
- 3) Osteoporosis and fractures
- 4) Breast cancer risk

Knowing about the various risks of the above diseases helps in prevention and change in health behaviours. In this article we will focus more on osteoporosis and menopause.

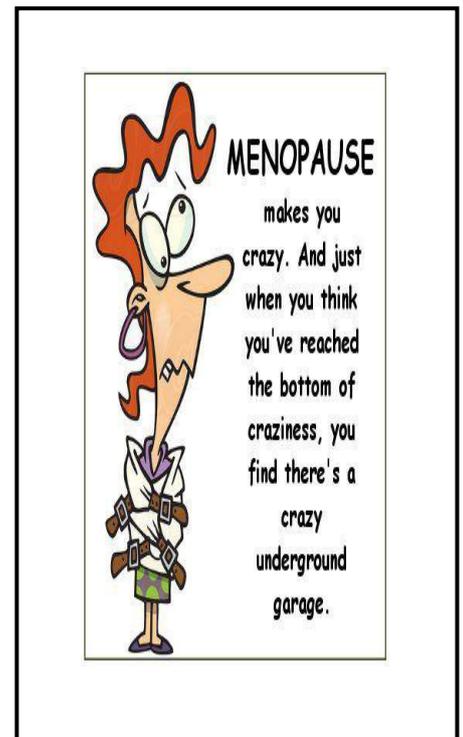
One of the consequences of menopause is the absence and depletion of estrogen, which is directly related to a decrease in bone density. The lower the estrogen levels, the lower the bone density is likely to be, which can lead to osteopenia. If osteopenia is untreated, it can lead to osteoporosis, thereby increasing the risk of fractures.

Factors affecting a woman's risk of osteoporosis are

- Long-term use of corticosteroid drugs
- Natural premature menopause or following the removal of ovaries at hysterectomy
- Genetic factors
- Diet low in calcium and other nutrients
- Lack of weight-bearing exercise
- Heavy alcohol consumption
- Smoking

Treatment includes hormone replacement therapy and supportive care.

HRT is available in various forms like oral tablets, vaginal gels, creams, skin patches, rings, etc. Judicious use of HRT is important in managing the symptoms.



For many women menopause can be a psychological, emotional and intellectual turning point but it definitely does not have to mean a decline. It can be a time for spiritual growth and positive change.

A great deal is known about menopause. Most women find that, once they are well informed; they have the ability to tackle their menopausal symptoms in a more positive and determined way.



Rebecca D'Souza, Clinical Psychologist

BALANCING WORK AND LIFE

We live in a world that is modernized, mechanized and materialistically driven. A person is often measured by the mark he or she leaves behind, the academic accolades, career success and his or her social standing. However, in all this we often get lost in this maze of living.

A childhood poem, simple but truthful, helps to focus on making choices

***“A poor life this if full of care
We have no time to stand and stare”***

Balancing work and life is maintaining equilibrium between work and life situations. The biggest challenge many of us face is how to balance the demands of family and career. While we want a happy and contented family life, we also have to make personal sacrifices in order to achieve our career aspirations. How do you balance work and family so that they do not interfere with each other? How do you fit roles such as husband/wife, mother/father and friend into an already hectic schedule?

A good balance is:

- Enough time for work and family
- To be able to enjoy moments in life
- When something goes wrong - to have resources to turn to
- On track - personally and professionally

There are things that one can do to have both a successful, satisfying career and a happy contented life.

Evaluate and Introspect: When was the last time you **achieved** and **enjoyed** something at work? With your family? With your friends? And how recently have you **achieved** and **enjoyed** something **just for yourself**?

Set your priority early: Ask yourself who am I and what do I want to do? Consider what is right for you: Prioritize your own commitments, what is important for you, where do you want to spend your time, energy, etc. and how do you define success?

Set realistic goals and expectations: Stop long enough to see the choices you make and the impact of these choices. When you actually do this it will give you an idea of where you are heading.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

At Work

- Strive for geographic proximity
- Learn to delegate
- Set professional limits
- Initiate a work wellness plan
- Set personal limits
- Use technology as far as possible



With Family/Friends

- Build a trustworthy support system
- Divide housework with spouse and kids
- Plan time with each other (Spouse, significant others)



With Yourself

Spend time with yourself
Meditate
Exercise
Eat well
Invest in yourself
Spend time with friends



THE INDIAN BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS CONFERENCE

The goal of treatment of disease is an absence of physical symptoms or discomfort. In cancer, however, treatment goes beyond - it encompasses all aspects of wellness to help destigmatize and demystify cancer but often facets of survivorship are either ignored or downplayed.

The Annual Indian Breast Cancer Survivors Conference instituted in 2011 was organized to address these lacunae. It is a mix of technical and practical sessions and activities that focus on helping patients and caregivers cope with issues that arise after completion of treatment.

The conference has seen a tremendous impact on survivors. From being medico-driven it is now patient-driven with the survivors taking charge in creation, implementation and execution of the conference. Participation of survivor attendees has increased every year. Recommending patients to the conference from different oncologists is noticed. A survivor volunteering as peer support onco-navigator is a positive consequence of the conference initiative.

2019 will see the 8th edition of the conference. It will take place on the 8th and 9th of November 2019 in Pune.

For more details, please send us an email on sde@nagfoundation.org



BEST OF MASSC 14th – 15th September 2019

The Best of MASCC (Multinational Association of Supportive Care in Cancer) conference was co-organized by **IASCC** and **Nag Foundation**. The conference had presentations, workshops and discussions on treatments and techniques for minimizing the symptoms of cancers and the side effects of its treatments. There were presentations on the psychological, social and economic dimensions of cancer diagnosis and treatment. The conference was well attended by doctors, para-medics, social workers, nurses and counsellors.



WOMENS CANCER CONCLAVE-14TH September 2019

Women's Cancer Initiative –Tata Memorial Hospital and Nag Foundation held their 2nd Women's Cancer Conclave on the 14th of September 2019. The theme of the meeting was recent advances in the diagnosis and management of ovarian cancer and breast cancer.

There were stimulating exchanges, valuable networking opportunities, practical insights and better understanding about new developments in BRCA mutation research and treatment options. This conference was attended by international and national oncologists.



Our activities reflect our vision and mission of Cancer – Care to Cure. Our dedicated team of doctors, professionals and survivor volunteers reach out into the community to destigmatise Cancer and to educate and inform women and men about the curative aspects of Cancer. The survivorship programmes for patients and caregivers help them navigate life after Cancer.

THE LAST QUARTER (1st July to 30th September 2019)

Total No. of patients supported in the last quarter - 30

Total No. of Herceptin vials given in the last quarter - 02

Total No. of Therapy Kits distributed - 43

Support group meetings - 02

Continuing Medical Education programmes for professionals - 04

Yoga therapy sessions twice a week for patients in the Day Care - a Nag Foundation initiative.

If the Nag Foundation has made a difference in the lives of our patients and enabled individuals to reconsider health priorities, it is because of the empathy and the generosity of our patrons and donors. We would like to thank –

**JOSEPH MARTIN ABREO
WINNIE DIWAN
MARIA MATRYS
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KAREN ANN REBELLO**

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A special thank you to all our donors who wish to remain anonymous

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