

Evidence Hormone Skin-Delivery System May Dramatically Reduce Risks

News-worthy—but traditional medicine lags far behind medical literature

According to a February 20th Wall Street Journal article by Tara Parker-Pope, studies by French researchers suggest risks associated with menopause hormones are “dramatically reduced when the drugs are absorbed through the skin”—not in pills.

The article states blood clot concerns may be “virtually eliminated” if a skin-delivery system is used. In the study of 881 women—published in *Circulation*, a journal of the American Heart Association—those taking hormone pills had four times the risk of developing a serious blood clot than those using patches, gels or creams. In fact, women taking hormones in a skin-delivery method were at “no higher risk than women who didn’t take hormones at all.”

By not passing through the liver—but rather directly entering the bloodstream as the body’s naturally occurring hormones do—potential side effects are avoided.

But are the benefits of a skin-delivery system really news? To most physicians—and subsequently, their patients—the answer is “yes.” However, there’s more to the answer.

What is perceived as “new information,” really isn’t. In fact, this information has been in the public domain for years. Physicians have been prescribing transdermal hormones for decades. As far back as the 1990s, the highly cited *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* demonstrated that oral estrogens resulted in significant inflammatory reaction.

The problem is doctors tend not to read the available medical literature. And that’s troubling—not just in the case of hormone skin-delivery systems, but for a plethora of similar medical circumstances.

As a result of being unaware of the established scientific literature, conventional doctors have become isolationists, compartmentalizing diseases, rather than seeing the big picture. For example, they see diabetes as a pancreatic disease and thyroid disease as just being about the thyroid. They’re wrong on all counts. Pancreatic and thyroid diseases are diseases of the endocrine system.

The real issue physicians need to focus on is regaining and maintaining endocrine balance. Until physicians understand this, patient outcomes will be far less than optimal or even fail completely.

All of our hormones are interactive. Deficiencies and/or excesses rarely exist alone. Think of an orchestra playing Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. You need all of the instruments and the choir. Never was there more truth in this statement—“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”—than when applied to our endocrine system.

Read the words of Terry Davies, MD, Professor of Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine - New York . . .

“Thyroid dysfunction is most often mistaken for a psychiatric disease. When the thyroid is overactive, it’s mistaken for anxiety. When it’s underactive, it’s mistaken for depression. Thyroid disorders are best detected early before they can trigger other medical problems. The thyroid hormone affects virtually all metabolism; too little slows it down. Studies have found that even a slight decrease in

thyroid function could increase cholesterol levels. So patients cannot know what their correct cholesterol is until their thyroid has been repaired.”

Dr. Davies’ statement also negates the counter argument (in favor of the hormone pill), presented in the same Wall Street Journal article. Since hormone pills pass through the liver, the proponents of the hormone pill say it does “a better job of raising a woman’s good cholesterol, lowering her bad cholesterol and lowering blood sugar.”

The point is, that isn’t even relevant. There are other ways to handle those issues, which ultimately are better for your overall health—like using testosterone and targeting thyroid function, as demonstrated by Dr. Davies.

There is a definite distinction being drawn between what the real state of medicine is and the Band-Aid approach, offered patients via the current disease-based system.

The science of age management medicine focuses on a balanced endocrine system and helps a physician identify and meet criteria, which places patients in the lowest possible risk category for disease—particularly heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, metabolic syndrome and Alzheimer’s disease—and thereby extending health span.

Integrative medicine uses a proactive, preventive approach to medical care. Better health—not disease—is our goal.