

QUARTER OF UK WOMEN RECEIVE NO SUPPORT DURING MENOPAUSE

Submitted by: Definition (formerly Limelight PR)

Wednesday, 3 May 2023

May 2023

A quarter of women in the UK who have experienced the menopause received no support throughout their journey, according to new research.

The data from not-for-profit healthcare provider, Benenden Health, reveals that as many as 25% of women received – or are currently receiving - no support from anyone at all when managing their menopause symptoms.

Overall, fewer than half of those experiencing the menopause received support from their partner (35%), 16% were helped by their wider family and as few as 6% were supported in any way by their employer.

When asked what they would have valued, or would currently value in support of the menopause, a third said more suitable treatment options (33%), a quarter (24%) requested more information available online, a fifth sought more support from government resources (18%) and 16% would have valued additional help from their employer.

The survey of 1,000 people who have experienced the menopause, or are currently experiencing it, also highlighted the impact that the menopause has on quality of life, with more than a quarter (28%) revealing that they performed less well at work as a result, a third (35%) cancelled social plans, a fifth (21%) found themselves too embarrassed to go out and more than one in ten (13%) experienced a relationship breakdown.

With individuals often fighting the menopause alone, Benenden Health's campaign seeks to remove the stigma around the topic and ensure that people have the targeted information, treatments and tools they need to combat its impact. The organisation has also developed its own dedicated menopause hub for members who access its mobile app, as well as a public resource, and is rolling out support for its own team internally.

The call comes as part of the mutual's 'Time for a check in' campaign, launched last year in partnership with Channel 4.

Naomi Thompson, 47, works at Benenden Health and noticed she was experiencing perimenopausal symptoms after seeing changes in her weight and skin, as well as having hot flushes and brain fog:

"There's so much information out there about the menopause, often from unreliable sources, that it can be quite overwhelming for women to know where to start seeking support to understand what they're going through. This means many women have to create their own ways of dealing with their experience.

"I've been lucky in that I get support at home, from my husband and family, and my workplace, which has developed a working group to offer support for employees experiencing the menopause. For me, working out ways to help manage symptoms has helped me stop feeling so isolated. I've made changes to my diet

and lifestyle and developed my own life hacks – from using voice notes to remember things to putting an Apple tag on my car keys, to help give me confidence and take back control.

“Most importantly, talking to people has really helped me– I talk to my team, to my family and open up about what’s really going on, and hope that other women who may be going through the same thing don’t feel so alone.”

Cheryl Lythgoe, Matron at Benenden Health, added: “The menopause can be a difficult time for some, with hormone changes leading to symptoms such as hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal dryness, low mood and anxiety.

“Although our research shows that a lot of people take on the challenge of the menopause alone, it’s important to remember that this doesn’t have to be the case and it’s really important that as a society, we are able to open up the conversation to include families, friends and workplaces, so that we can mitigate the impact of the menopause in all aspects of people’s lives.

“If you do believe you are being affected by symptoms of the menopause, or have concerns about this happening – such as believing it to be delayed - it’s also important to speak to your GP, who will be able to support you during your menopausal journey.”

Benenden Health is on a mission to get everybody talking about and checking in with their health more. Through a Benenden Health membership, individuals can join 850,000+ others who are already checking in with their health through access to physical and mental health services, including dedicated menopause support on the Benenden Health app, 24/7 GP and Mental Health helpline, quick access to diagnosis and treatment and a whole lot more.

For more information about Benenden Health, go to: <https://www.benenden.co.uk/menopause-hub/>.

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Notes to editors

The research was conducted by Censuswide, with 1,019 women in UK (assigned female at birth) who are currently, or have previously, experienced the menopause (22.03.2023 - 27.03.2023)

Through their ‘Time for a check in’ campaign, Benenden Health and Channel 4 are on a mission to get everybody talking about and checking in with their health more, with the ultimate aim of improving the nation’s health.

With a Benenden Health membership, individuals can join 850,000+ other members who are already checking in with their health, with access to a GP 24/7, getting back on their feet with Physiotherapy, and taking the time to have that much needed conversation with a dedicated 24/7 Mental Health Helpline.

Benenden Health is a not-for-profit organisation, founded in 1905 with the purpose of people joining together to help pay for medical care. It is one of the UK's longest serving and most respected mutual healthcare societies, offering an affordable alternative to health insurance to more than 840,000 members. Further data from the survey is available on request.