Breaking Down the Barriers to Women’s Wellness:
An unscientific, but evidence based look at issues affecting women’s health

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Objectives

After completion of this presentation the participants will be able to:
1. List three barriers to health care for women
2. List three issues affecting the mental, cardiovascular, reproductive and menopausal health of women.
3. Have a laugh at the barriers and issues that cause of to be the way we are!

Disclaimer

• This presentation may seem strange at times...this presentation is not a reflection of the UAB or SON (hoping to keep my job after this especially since my boss in in the audience)
What are the issues and barriers?

• Issues
  – Cardiac health: hypertension, heart disease
  – Mental health: depression
  – Reproductive health: infertility, fertility
  – Menopausal Health: premenopause, hormone changes

• Barriers
  – Lack of access to care
  – Lack of awareness of issues
  – Lack of time at visit
  – Lack of putting themselves FIRST

Cardiac

• More women than men die of heart disease each year
• HD is the number ONE killer of women
• HD causes 1 in 3 women’s death’s each year
  – ONE WOMAN EVERY MINUTE
• Since 1984 more women than men have died from HD
• 1 in 31 American women dies from breast cancer each year; 1 in 3 dies of HD!
• Hispanic women develop HD 10 years earlier than Caucasian women
• CV Disease is the leading cause of death for African American women
• 46.9% of AA women over 20 have cardiovascular disease

Urgency!

• 349.7/100,000 women is AL died of major CV disease
• We made the top four
• 64% of women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease have NO PREVIOUS SYMPTOMS!
Risk factors in women

• Diabetes
• Metabolic syndrome
• Mental stress
• Depression
• Smoking
• Lack of physical activity
• Low levels of estrogen
• Pregnancy complications such as HBP

Symptoms

• Women have unusual symptoms:
  – Often no chest pain
  – May have:
    • Neck, jaw, shoulder, upper back pain
    • SOB
    • Right arm pain
    • Sweating
    • N & V
    • Lightheadedness or dizziness
    • Unusual fatigue

What can we do to prevent risk of HD?

• Quit or don’t start smoking!
• Exercise 30 to 60 minutes a day on most days of the week or 60 to 90 minutes if you need to lose weight
• Maintain a healthy weight
• Eat a diet that low in saturated fat, cholesterol and salt
Stress

video

Exercise

• video

Barriers: What can we do to support each other?

• Mention to your patients that HD is the number one killer of women.
• Put it on your answering machine!
• Put a sign in the exam room!
• Tell patients about exercise and splitting up the minutes during the day.
• Challenge: call a friend and instead of saying, “let’s do lunch” say, “let’s go for a walk.”
Mental Health Issues

- Mental illnesses affect women and men differently
- 23.8% of American women with a diagnosable mental health disorder in the last year (15% of men)
- Women are 2x more likely than men to develop certain mental health conditions like depression, eating disorders, and panic disorders.
- Less than ½ of person who meet diagnostic criteria for psychological disorders are identified by providers.

Facts

- Women have lower serotonin levels
- Women process serotonin at slower rates
- Women are affected by sociocultural influences and beliefs
- Women are typically been object of sexualization.
Issues

- Depression – twice as common in women
- Depression – more persistent in women
- Anxiety – twice as common in women
- Abuse – is often a factor in women’s mental health problems
- Dementia – 2/3 of patients are women
- Eating disorders – 1.9% of all women will experience an eating disorder in their lifetime
- PTSD – risk of developing after any traumatic event is 20.4%; 8% in men.

Barriers: what can we do to support each other?

- Lack of access to care – so other areas of medical care have to step up
- Encourage to speak up
- Look for signs and symptoms
  - Weight gain or weight loss
  - Poor sleeping habits
  - Lack of energy
- Talk to our young people

Fight Like A Girl

- Insert video
- 12 seconds to 1:58
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUQBjWYDTs
Reproductive Issues

Reproductive issues

• Child birth – Rex Generation
  – Over the last seven years the number of live births per 1000 women between 15 and 29 in America plunged 9%
  – Small pets skyrocketed during this time
  – More single and unmarried women in their late 20s and early 30s – buy the most small dogs

Those sayings!

“Who will take care of you when you are old?”
“You don’t want to experience the joy of childbirth?”
“What will you do in your later years?”
Facts

• Lowest birth rate in US history
• There’s no one path to fulfillment
• Empowerment to do what THEY believe is best for them
  – Don’t need to follow the invisible time line of life

Issues Affecting Fertility

• Endometriosis – 25-50% of infertile women have endometriosis and 30-40% of women with endometriosis are infertile
• PCOS – 5-10% of women have PCOS
• POI
• Uterine Fibroids – 5-10% of infertile women
• STDs

Barriers: what can we do to support each other?

• Education on treatment options
• Support groups
• Facebook
• COST – advocate for insurance companies to assist with costs of infertility
Reproductive success

- What to expect when expecting?
  - Helpful or harmful
- Be prepared for others to touch your belly?
- Be prepared for advice whether you like it or not!
- How to learn what you need to know –
  - Ask others
  - Tell them how YOU would do it
  - Because it is the last time you will know anything

The joys of impending motherhood

The joy of toddler motherhood

- video
Perimenopause/Menopausal Issues

“The Change”

Issues: Brain Fog

- Brain Fog and short term memory loss
  - Adrenal fatigue
  - Thyroid dysfunction
- Loss of memory and poor concentration
- “Going crazy!”

This is a need

- .49 to 2.28
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbZ4MLc4th8
Hot Flashes

- sudden, intense, hot feeling on the face and upper body
- perhaps preceded or accompanied by a rapid heartbeat and sweating, nausea, dizziness, anxiety, headache, weakness, or a feeling of suffocation
- Some women experience an “aura,” an uneasy feeling just before the hot flash that lets them know what’s coming
- The flash is followed by a flush, leaving the woman reddened and perspiring
- soaker or merely a moist upper lip

Triggers of Hot Flashes

- hot weather
- smoking
- caffeine
- spicy foods
- alcohol
- tight clothing
- stress
- sugar

Insomnia

- 33-51% of menopausal women state that the hot flashes disturb sleep
- Due to decrease of estrogen-progesterone a sleep promoting hormone
- Stress and cortisol levels
Sexual Issues

- Decrease in hormones causes decreased arousal, less sensitive to touching and stroking.
- Can lead to less interest in sex.
- Decreased in estrogen causes a decrease of blood supply to the vagina causes decreased lubrication causing dryness and pain.

Sexual issues

- Bladder control problems
- Some women have an improved sex drive
- Grown apart
- Medications: hypertension, antidepressants
- Poor body image

Weight Change

- Menopot
Ways to help

- Make lists
- Routine
- Plant estrogens: isoflavens
- Lifestyles changes
- Relieving insomnia
- Avoid the triggers
- Relieving painful intercourse
- Vaginal dryness be treated with water-soluble lubricants such as Astroglide or K-Y Jelly

Ways to Help

- Relieving painful intercourse by:
  - Vaginal dryness be treated with water-soluble lubricants such as Astroglide or K-Y Jelly
  - Estrogen
  - Hormone replacement

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MQkFZK29t8
What is the most important thing to do for any of these issues......

- Support each other
- Evidence based practices
- Consider a check sheet about menopausal symptoms
- The change can be BETTER!