



13 October 2022

Thanks to the 271 people who showed up yesterday to enjoy [Over The Bloody Moon's](#) "Menopause, The Last Taboo" workshop. It was great to see such engagement with the issue.

[If you didn't get a chance to tune in, you can do so by clicking here](#) where a [Zoom link is available until November 12th](#). This is only accessible for Oxford University employees. [For those who are hearing impaired, you can read the Closed Captions here.](#)

In "Menopause The Last Taboo" workshop, we learned that:

- Women can thrive through menopause with open conversation and support at work, early intervention, and effective menopause management
- Everyone experiences menopause in their own way
- Menopause is a dynamic experience, so support options at work need to be continually assessed and tweaked
- Menopause is made a lot easier if we give people permission to share their experiences and use active listening and empathy skills to respond
- We should signpost people experiencing symptoms to their GP, or a [British Menopause Society specialist](#). The Menopause Tracker and Clinician Checklist that Lesley referenced can be downloaded from [Over The Bloody Moon's resources](#)

We also had an additional 15-minute session, post this workshop where Lesley Salem, ran through some of the additional questions in the chat that we didn't have time to cover. [You can listen to this bonus session here.](#) For those who are hearing impaired, [you can read the Closed Captions here.](#)

If you want to learn more about enhancing your own menopause wellbeing you may want to [sign up to Over The Bloody Moon's newsletter](#) which offers free resources and tips or [OTBM Club!](#) a free menopause hub or [visit their shop to pick up symptom management tools.](#) OTBM also run free monthly [Menopause Management Masterclasses found here](#) and have a vibrant, supportive community on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Information about the anti-flush clothing offer is also attached, but please note that staff taking up these offers do so at their own discretion, as with other [discounts](#) offered by external companies.

We will be using the feedback you gave us about the idea of a menopause network, or networks to look at how we can set something up at Oxford. Look out for more information on this.

We are planning to re-run the workshop session on 7 February (12.30-1.30) so if you have feedback about the session in general please email kate.butler@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Thank you to those who pre-submitted questions for this workshop. Lesley tried to build answers to many of those relating to personal menopause journeys into her presentation, and some were covered afterwards, but we were so overwhelmed with questions that there wasn't time to cover them all. Some of the pre-submitted questions were about the University's guidance and future plans and these are covered below. We will be compiling some of these into some FAQs for the website.



Pre-submitted questions relating to University's guidance and working arrangements

Question	Answer
What support is in place (or could be put in place) for people who go through surgical early menopause and might not be considered by colleagues to be in the usual age-bracket for menopausal symptoms but may suffer a more sudden onset of problematic symptoms?	The guidance is intended to be broad enough to be able to enable support, whatever the individual experience. And we'll try to ensure that our awareness raising activities continue to make the point that this can affect a wide range of people at all ages, for a variety of reasons, and that it's really important for people not to make assumptions about who might be affected.
What does being in the menopause network involve?	We are developing ideas on a network at present – there seems to be appetite from the pre-session questions with a lot of support for the idea of divisional or university wide Teams channel with occasional (termly?) in person meetings offered. Watch out for more information on this.
As someone about to enter the menopause, I can state with confidence that there is a whole world of problems related to menstruation before one hits perimenopause and hurtles towards actual menopause. Will the University broaden its awareness campaigns to include people who are suffering from non-menopausal, but still connected to menstruation, issues? For example, adenomyosis and endometriosis?	In the immediate term the focus is on menopause. But by talking about menopause we hope to build a more open environment where everyone can talk about the issues affecting them and seek the support they need to thrive in the workplace at all life stages. And the interventions and approaches outlined in the guidance may be equally appropriate where other women's health related issues are impacting on an individual in the workplace.
Do people take sick-days for Menopause, if so, how prevalent is it and is it accepted by managers?	We don't have reliable data on this. Menopause-related absence has not been recorded separately, and it's likely that women have either not recognised that symptoms may be menopause-related or are masking menopause-related absence by reporting it as something else. However, our new guidance says that whilst sickness related to menopause is still counted in the same way as other absence in terms of reporting and keeping records, that "there may be times when it could be unfair or discriminatory to measure menopause-related absence as part of the person's overall attendance."
How flexible is flexible working within the NDM?	The University's flexible working scheme applies to all staff in the same way – but operational requirements vary by department



How should managers open up conversations about the menopause? Are women and men going to be equally happy discussing this subject?

Our guidance is clear that it's for individuals to open up the conversations, rather than managers. But, that managers have a key role in creating an environment where people can open up conversations. They need to be informed and responsive. The more we discuss it openly, and mainstream the issue, the easier it will be for everyone to do this.

Are there any studies at Oxford that we can get involved with

We have contacted the department of Womens and Reproductive Health to ask.

Would the University consider getting a doctor/expert to come and talk to anyone who was interested about general medical advice and current research

We will explore as part of thinking about how networks might best work – some have suggested that termly meetings with speakers would be good. The Wellbeing programme are starting to consider women's health and men's health, amongst others, as themes for their work.

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