

New treatment hope for menopausal depression

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A trial involving middle-aged Australian women is investigating the use of a hormone treatment for symptoms of menopausal depression.

Researchers at the Monash Alfred Psychiatry Research Centre (MAPrc) are trialling a hormone, known as Tibolone, to treat women with [severe depression](#) associated with menopause.

The trial will compare the use of Tibolone alone to treat depression as well as in conjunction with standard [antidepressant medication](#).

Principal investigator Professor Jayashri Kulkarni, Director of MAPrc, said for most women, depression typically began in the pre-menopausal period five years or more before the onset of menopausal symptoms.

"During menopause, [estrogen levels](#) decline, which is associated with higher risk of depressive symptoms," Professor Kulkarni said.

"We know that the brain and mental state is affected by fluctuating hormone levels about five years earlier than the common physical symptoms

of hot flushes and cessation of menstruation."

Professor Kulkarni said depression and anxiety was a major underreported and understudied effect of menopause.

"One of the main reasons that many women seek help from menopause clinics or their doctors is for depression and anxiety," Professor Kulkarni said.

"We hope that tibolone will reduce the severity of depressive symptoms, and in turn improve every day functioning for women with menopausal depression."

The study is currently recruiting women aged between 45 and 65 who have been diagnosed with [major depression](#) or are currently experiencing depressive symptoms.

Provided by Monash University

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