

Urgent trials to tackle depression

Karen O'Sullivan, 7News Health Reporter, Yahoo!7 February 16, 2012



Doctors fear an alarming number of middle-aged women could be taking their own lives after suffering from a little known, but severe form of depression.

Tanaz Mesic is happy now, but just three months ago she was rock bottom.

The 44-year-old was diagnosed with Perimenopausal Depression, a little known depression associated with hormone changes.

Tanaz told 7News: "I was overwhelmed by fear, uncontrollable crying, a sense of sadness and hopelessness."

Doctors say this type of depression can lead to suicide.

Alfred Hospital Professor Jayashri Kulkarni explained: "This is very severe depression and it can have a mortality as well, and that's the really sad part about this."

Other symptoms include anger, hostility and irritability.

Professor Kulkarni added: "The hormones change in the brain long before the body symptoms are noticed, which can make it quite difficult to diagnose."

Professor Kulkarni says Australian Bureau of Statistics figures reflect just how serious this type of depression for women can be.

"Between 50 and 54 there's quite a high rate of completed suicide, and that's of grave concern."

Menopause symptoms, including hot flushes, weight gain, and sleeping problems combined with depression can be treated together.

Women with these symptoms should find a doctor they're comfortable with, take some form of hormone replacement therapy, which may include Phytoestrogens, natural plant-based foods in Estrogen, as well as an anti-depressant.

Since beginning a combined hormone replacement therapy and targeted anti-depressant, Tanaz is a changed woman.

"Within a week I was smiling again," she said. "She (Professor Kulkarni) was absolutely amazing. She saved me, absolutely saved me."

In an effort to find the best treatment for women with Perimenopausal Depression, the Alfred Hospital is conducting separate trials and is looking for women with symptoms to participate.

Professor Kulkarni added: "So in the hormone treatment, we might have a very potent anti-depressant treatment in itself."

If you would like to participate in the trials, call Emmy Gavrilidis on 0390766564.

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/vic/latest/a/-/newshome/12929412/urgent-trial-s-to-beat-depression>