Hot Flushes Result of Estrogen Addiction

UBC Professor of Endocrinology Dr. Jerilynn C. Prior presents finding on estrogen addiction and its treatment with progesterone at Women's Health Congress 2010 in Washington DC

Vancouver, Canada (PRWEB) March 26, 2010 -- A woman having a hot flush would fail a lie detector test. She may also be addicted to estrogen, according to Dr. Jerilynn C. Prior, author and Professor of Endocrinology at the University of British Columbia. Prior will be presenting on the idea of 'estrogen addiction' and its treatment with progesterone at the Women's Health Congress, 2010 in Washington, DC, held March 26 to 28 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott.

The positive lie detector test isn't because she's not telling the truth, but because "she's experiencing a massive release of brain chemicals that increases skin blood flow and changes her skin chemistry to produce a galvanic response, or positive lie detector test," explains Prior. "Integrating what we know about hot flushes has led to the hypothesis that the brain exposed to prolonged high estrogen levels reacts like the brain of an addict without a fix when estrogen levels drop. The best animal model of hot flushes is the heroin-addicted mouse."

The estrogen addiction idea fits with the reality that most estrogen-treated women who take it for hot flushes will experience an increased number and intensity of hot flushes and night sweats when they stop estrogen. Prior has found that progesterone helps women to gradually decrease and stop estrogen without a rebound increase in hot flushes (wwwcemcor.ubc.ca "Stopping Estrogen").

"The importance of the estrogen addiction idea is that it explains how progestins or progesterone work to effectively treat hot flushes," says Prior. Estrogen and progesterone work together in every tissue of women's bodies she writes in the book she co-authored with Susan Baxter, The Estrogen Errors--Why Progesterone is Better for Women's Health.

A study in Neuropsychopharmacology (2004) shows that women are at greater risk for cocaine addiction than are men. "Estrogens increase the excitability of the brain and thus the risk for dependence or addiction. Progesterone, on the other hand, calms the brain and decreases anxiety," says Prior. Extensive animal research and some early human studies show that progesterone decreases drug craving and lessens the psychological and physiological effects of cocaine's "high."

Jerilynn C. Prior, MD, FRCPC, ABIM, ABEM, is a Professor of Medicine, Endocrinology at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada). She is the founder and Scientific Director of the Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research (CeMCOR http://www.cemcor.ubc.ca/) and has published over 120 peer-reviewed scientific articles in medical journals including The New England Journal of Medicine and Lancet. Prior is invited as a Visiting Lecturer at institutions across Canada and the US (including the New York Academy of Sciences and Harvard School of Public Health) as well as internationally. She is author of the award-finalist book, Estrogen's Storm Season--Stories of Perimenopause (CeMCOR, 2005, [reprinted 2007] Vancouver, Canada), and The Estrogen Errors--Why Progesterone is Better for Women's Health.

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