

The PPG is about  
PARTICIPATION  
your participation



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next event and have your say

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## PPG EVENT: "MENOPAUSE MATTERS" 10 May 2018 at VMC

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The event was led by **Dr Rankine**, who pointed out that 100 years ago when a woman's life expectancy was 45 years most women did not reach the age of the menopause, and those that did coped with the symptoms – hot flushes, mood swings, irritability, insomnia and indecision – as best they could in a domestic environment.

Today, most of us are working women, many with stressful jobs who need to be fit to perform at their best throughout the menopausal years. Some lucky women are fortunate to sail through it, but most of us need help to alleviate the symptoms in order to carry on as normal. 45% of women say that work can be a struggle during the menopause and 47% say that they would not tell their employer the real reason for taking time off. The menopause can adversely affect people's sex lives, and partners often feel helpless because they don't understand what's going on. So what are the treatment options? There are basically three:

1. *Medical/pharmaceutical – Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)*
2. *Lifestyle and diet*
3. *Alternatives such as acupuncture, various herbal remedies and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*

of which the most effective is HRT. There are a lot of myths surrounding HRT many of which are not evidence based. Scientific studies tell us that increased risk of HRT-related breast cancer and cardio-vascular problems is minuscule compared with lifestyle risk factors.

On the contrary, HRT will protect the heart if taken early on in the menopause, and is the best preventer of osteoporosis, whereas being overweight more than doubles the risk of breast cancer in women aged 50–59. HRT does not 'delay the inevitable'; it effectively manages the symptoms of the menopause, and lower doses of HRT continue to work when women are older. It is not true that you can only have HRT for 5 years. It may be taken for as long as necessary if it makes you feel better.

**Nigel Denby**, a registered dietician, spoke about the importance of lifestyle and diet during the menopause, although he began by saying unequivocally that lifestyle and diet alone is never as effective as HRT.

**Anna Kiff**, an acupuncturist, then explained how acupuncture therapy had proved to be effective in alleviating menopausal symptoms as part of an overall plan combined with HRT, diet and lifestyle.

In conclusion **Dr Rankine** said: There is no need to suffer. Consult your GP. HRT can bring huge relief for many of the symptoms women have to suffer during the menopause.

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A full report of this event can be read on the PPG section of the VMC website at [victoriamedicalcentre.com/](http://victoriamedicalcentre.com/). Also see an excellent series of videos about the menopause and the efficacy of HRT by Dr Heather Currie on the "Menopause Matters" website.

# PPPG

## Patient Participation Group

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Summer 2018



## news

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*Dear VMC and LPMC Patients,*

We had a disappointing attendance at May's PPG 'Menopause Matters' event. Here was a chance to hear Dr Susan Rankine talk about the subject that is her passion – women's health. Was it bad timing, or was it that talking openly about the menopause is still taboo in our otherwise liberated society? Bravo to the two husbands who cared enough to come along. Dr Rankine pointed out that one third of the workforce are menopausal women, yet half choose to struggle on without medication. That's no way to break through the glass ceiling! The menopause is a fact of life and women who have symptoms have a choice: you can suffer the mental and physical side-effects, possibly causing you to under-perform at work and have relationship problems, or you can consult your GP and find out about a range of safe, scientifically proven medical options. Dr Rankine runs a Menopause Clinic one Tuesday every month where patients have slightly longer appointments to discuss their symptoms and choices.

The Government's Health Policy as part of NHS England's Five Year Forward View is compelling GP practices to look at alternative models of care in order to share services and more. VMC PPG has been invited to attend meetings of the new South Westminster Primary Care Home made up of nine local practices.

Rest assured that the PPG will make every effort to ensure that patients come first, and will vigorously champion continuity of patient care.

The PPG is always interested to hear about your views, needs and what events you would like us to organise. Do send us an email or just drop us a note in the PPG black box in reception if you want to have your say.

*Best wishes,*

Mary Orr  
Chairman, VMC PPG

### !!! SAVE THE DATE !!!

### Thursday, 4 October

## DIABETES

signs, symptoms, treatments,  
high risk groups

### Dr Ash Thakore

### 6.00 pm

Group Room VMC,  
29 Upper Tachbrook Street

# NEWS FROM THE PRACTICE

## STAFF CHANGES

**Doctors** Dr Carol Tang has left, but VMC welcomes Dr William Ratliff and Dr Anthony Cramer.

**Nurses** Rosie Mason and Deborah Momodu are moving out of London, but Nancy Alvares is training to become a practice nurse and will be dividing her time between acting as anticoagulation nurse lead and a practice nurse. Fran Patterson who has recently been covering for a maternity leave will also be staying on. A health care assistant has been appointed to help the nurses, and in addition VMC has a new clinical pharmacist, Pamela Nyatanga.

**Reception** Catherine Nancy is leaving and Hannah Cartwright will soon be on maternity leave, while Simran Degun will be returning after having her baby VMC sends best wishes to the leavers, and welcomes new arrivals to the enlarged team.

**CQC Report** VMC has received an overall rating of 'Good' with two areas of care as 'Outstanding' in the latest Care Quality Commission Report and retains its position as the highest-rated General Practice in the area. The complete report can be seen on the VMC website.



VMC sends heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Rosemary, our much-loved health visitor, who died suddenly on the eve of her retirement after 40 years of health visiting. A book of remembrance is in reception if you would like to leave a message for her family in Ireland.

## CLINICS and SERVICES

### BLOOD TESTS – walk-in procedure

If a doctor or nurse says you need a blood test you should first ask reception for your completed form, then you can walk in and have your blood test any time between 8.00 am and 1.00 pm Monday to Friday. It is not possible to book an appointment online. It is wise to ask if it is a fasting blood test, which means you must have nothing to eat or drink except water for 12 hours before having your blood taken.

**HIV or SYPHILIS** screening. For an on-demand blood test just pick up a blue card at reception who will print a form and add you to the list of blood tests that morning. You will get your results in complete confidence and we will help you with advice or referral if needed.

### PRESCRIPTIONS – did you know ...?

Patients may no longer ask their pharmacist to order a prescription from the practice. This is a national policy that will avoid the huge cost to the NHS of stock-piling and waste. You may still order your repeat prescription in writing, in person at the practice, or online via your smart-phone, computer or laptop. VMC urges patients to register and get their repeat prescriptions online since this is so helpful, efficient and cost-effective for the NHS. You must first ask reception for a username and password.

**If you need help**, please book a time to talk to someone at reception who can take you through the process step-by-step. Once registered you will also be able to book your appointments and access your medical record online.

## CLINICS and SERVICES cont.

### DATA PROTECTION

You are probably aware that regulations have recently come into force that update the Data Protection Act. They strengthen an individual's rights about how your personal data is used and how it must be protected, which is a good thing. For more details you can pick up a leaflet at VMC, or read about them on the VMC website. In the past many patients have given us permission to communicate with them by text message or by email on matters concerning appointments or their general health care. Now VMC has to ask your permission in order to continue to do so. You may not have given us permission in the past, but if you would like in future to receive phone calls, texts or email messages from the practice, please come into reception to sign up to VMC's online database.

### NEWS from NAPP

At the annual conference of the National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP) the importance of continuity of care was the key topic, with the President of the Royal College of GPs defending GP practices against proposed 'federations of practices' by saying that GPs play an important part in orchestrating joined-up care in order to achieve the optimal outcome for the patient. "The GP must be a safety net with person-centred care. Doctors will give better care if they know you personally, not just as a series of notes."

**If you would like to know more** about the results of your clinical laboratory tests, NAPP and VMC recommend that you go to [labtestsonline.org.uk](http://labtestsonline.org.uk), a FREE non-commercial resource that provides patients with easy-to-understand information about laboratory tests.

## PRACTICE PROFILE



"My name is Nancy Alvares. I have been working at VMC since 2014 as an anticoagulation specialist nurse. I am originally from India and came to the UK in 2001. Initially I worked on an acute ward at a Manchester NHS trust. Since then I have gained the qualification and experience in anti-coagulation and very much enjoy this specialist role. It involves looking after patients who take blood thinners. In the recent past newer blood thinners that do not require monitoring have come into existence. This means that in future I will have a smaller caseload of patients to manage. For this reason I have decided to train and become a practice nurse whilst still doing my specialist role. VMC has been a lovely place to work so far and I hope to equally enjoy my new role here as a practice nurse.

When I am not working I like to travel, cook and spend time with my little girl."

Nancy Alvares

Contact Victoria MC and Lees Place MC by e-mail: [CLCCG.VMC@nhs.net](mailto:CLCCG.VMC@nhs.net)  
Contact the Patient Participation Group by e-mail (on PPG matters only.  
Not to be used for clinical or practice matters) [vmcpvg@live.co.uk](mailto:vmcpvg@live.co.uk)