THE EFFICACY OF A POLLEN EXTRACT AS NON ESTROGENIC ALTERNATIVE TO HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY IN SYMPTOMATIC PERIMENOPAUSAL WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION
The endocrine changes which lead to the menopause result in various physical and psychological symptoms. Hormonal replacement therapy has come into disrepute because of safety concerns and alternative therapy are required.

AIM OF THE STUDY
The aim of our study is to evaluate whether a product made from pollen extracts alleviates the perimenopausal symptoms.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
We recruited 43 women, aged 45-55 years old and we recorded general health body, blood samples for routine examination and for complete hormone profile. On inclusion, and at 3 months' therapy, the patients were asked to grade the severity of 8 symptoms (hot flushes, profuse sweating, sleep disturbance, mood swings, irritability, dysphoria, headache, decreased efficiency/fatigue) using a VAS scale from 0 (no complaint) to 5 (the worst possible). The patients were given the pollen product, two tablets each morning, and evaluated three months later.

RESULTS
40 women completed the trial. The treatment revealed a statistically significant reduction of the most perimenopausal symptoms severity (p<0.05); particularly 87% of the patients reported an improvement of mood, irritability, quality of sleep. Headache, decreased efficiency also reduced significantly. Three of the eight symptoms—hot flushes, profuse sweating, dysphoria—showed a significant reduction, but the changes (-45%, -40% and -27% respectively) did not attain a statistically significant difference (p=0.3). Overall 80% of the patients thought the product was "very effective" in improving the quality of life, and there were no reported unwanted or adverse effects. However it had a gradual onset of action, requiring >1 month of therapy to exert its full effect.

DISCUSSION
Good tolerance, the absence of phyto-estrogens and its non-hormonal action mechanism enable the pollen extract to be safely suggested for therapy of symptomatic perimenopausal women.