Menopausal Transition – pathophysiology and management

Due to the approaching exhaustion of the ovarian follicular reserve, the menopausal transition is characterised by an increasing variability of the length of the menstrual cycles, the occurrence of heavy bleedings, the continuing necessity of a safe contraception inspite of the increasing risk of combined oral hormonal contraception, the initially intermittent appearance of climacteric symptoms (mainly vasomotor symptoms, emotional lability, vaginal dryness and sexual dysfunction), and last but not least a rapid increase of bone turnover leading to an accelerated decrease of bone mineral density. The resulting and in part contradictory therapeutic needs demand a strictly individual approach depending on the medical history and the actual personal and partnership situation of each woman. Today, several hormonal choices are available to allow a safe and smooth transition from the late reproductive state to the early postmenopause with an acceptable risk-benefit-ratio.