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**MENOPAUSE, MOOD AND MEMORY:
THE EFFECT OF HORMONE REPLACEMENT
THERAPY ON MOOD AND EVERYDAY MEMORY IN
MID-LIFE WOMEN**

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Virginia Margaret Bristow

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ABSTRACT

There is considerable neuro-scientific evidence that oestrogen influences memory and enhances mood because of its influence on brain mechanisms. Research on the effect of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) on both mood and memory is equivocal although findings indicate that oestrogen may enhance verbal memory. It has been suggested that this area of research should expand to include ecologically valid measures of everyday memory. This study examined the effect of HRT on mood and everyday memory in two separate samples of mid-life women. A cross-sectional comparison of HRT users and non-users among 124 women aged between 40 and 60 years showed that there were no significant differences in mood between HRT users and non-users. However, HRT users performed significantly better on tests of everyday memory and delayed verbal memory when the effects of age, IQ, and education were controlled for. A within-subjects comparison, using the same measures, with 17 women before, and 3 months after, HRT use, showed that negative mood states were reduced and positive mood states were enhanced by HRT, when change in stressful life events, self-rated health, sleep problems, vasomotor symptoms, and exercise were controlled for. The longitudinal sample also showed that everyday memory, working memory, and delayed verbal memory improved with HRT use. The improvement in memory was not mediated by mood. These results suggest that the effect of HRT on mood may only be short-term but that oestrogen does enhance everyday memory.

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