

# The effects of the menopause and the use of hormonal replacement therapy on the female professional voice users' perceptions

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During the menopause, concentrations of estrogens and progesterone fall significantly, and the ratio of estrogen to androgen becomes androgen dominant. Elevated concentrations of androgens have been associated with negative effects on female voices. For those women whose careers depend on their voices, even mild vocal changes may significantly affect professional wellbeing and quality of life. This research explores female professional voice users' perceptions of vocal variations associated with the menopause and hormone replacement therapy (HRT) use, as well as implications for career management and professional wellbeing. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with five post-menopausal female professional voice users with different vocal backgrounds. Questions focused on (1) vocal quality, (2) self-identity and self-esteem, (3) career management, (4) professional quality of life and general wellbeing, and (5) opinions and feelings toward HRT use. The results highlight the importance of undertaking further research on the effects of climacteric hormonal variations and HRT use on the professional voice. With our ageing population, it is likely that more menopausal women will seek to maintain effective communication skills across their careers, with those whose careers depend on their voices meriting special concern.

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