



The Sexy Years: Discover the hormone connection: *The secret to fabulous sex, great health, and vitality for women and men*

By Suzanne Somers
Crown Publishers

This is Suzanne Somers' original book and talks about her experience with bioidentical hormones. It is largely a series of interviews with physicians and other health professionals regarding hormone use and menopause. It is amazing that most criticism leveled at this book by the mainstream medical community is against Suzanne Somers. Sections that were wholly written by Somers produced some good material about lifestyle, exercise, diet and attitude — she approaches her life in a holistic way that should be applauded.

Even if one disagrees with some of her points, as a physician, my agreement or criticisms should be leveled at the various professionals interviewed in the book. Each of the doctors interviewed wrote their own books (and some are noted on my reference list). Taking a look at the physicians individually, I would like to note some of my concerns.

Dr. Diana Schwarzbein

Dr. Schwarzbein is a medical endocrinologist and her main expertise is in diabetes management. She has written *The Schwarzbein Principle* and provides many good insights about diet, exercise and the dangers of elevated insulin levels. Unfortunately, she makes one major error in menopause management. She believes that progesterone is the cause of pregnancy diabetes. This is incorrect. The placenta makes a hormone called Human Placental Lactogen (HPL). HPL raises insulin resistance and can lead to diabetes of pregnancy. Progesterone does not cause insulin resistance — because of this error, Dr. Schwarzbein uses minimal progesterone for too short an interval and mistakenly believes that bleeding every month is vitally important.

As a result of these two errors, Dr. Schwarzbein prescribes too much estrogen and progesterone for too few days in a row. This leads to estrogen dominance and increases the risk of endometrial cancer, which affects the lining tissue of the uterus. In her new book, *Ageless*, Somers recounts her heavy bleeding and

excess uterine lining growth that resulted in Somers having to undergo a hysterectomy. Unfortunately, neither Somers nor Schwarzbein understand that too much estrogen and too little progesterone was the cause of the problem. Regarding withdrawing hormones from a menopausal woman — there should be little or no bleeding. The lining of the uterus should be quiet.

Dr. Uzzi Reiss

Dr. Reiss is a gynecologist and has written his own book. His information is good and mostly describes the use of oral hormone drops. Since the book was published, I understand that he has changed this method of administration.

Drs. Laura Berman and Jennifer Berman

The material in this section is generally good with a couple of caveats. Although there are benefits of testosterone therapy, using the hormone only in sufficient amounts to bring a woman back into the normal female range has only a small effect on libido. Many of the doctors who use testosterone shots or pellets to increase libido, administer huge doses. I have measured the levels on some of these patients and found testosterone levels ten or twenty times the normal female range. This can't be good. The Berman's promote Viagra use in women — generally it does little for desire or performance. Unfortunately, the great female libido drug still eludes us.

Dr. Eugene Shippen

One of the few to move forward to a second book publication, *Ageless*, there is a lot of good information. Shippen's book, *The Testosterone Syndrome* is also a valuable resource.

Dr. Michael Galitzer

Anti-aging is a complex field. This small text can only be a jumping off point for study.

I recommend this book for anyone seeking an easy to read volume about menopause and hormone management.

Robert P. Goldman, MD