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## Effect of hormone replacement therapy for menopause on the mechanical properties of skin.

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**OBJECTIVE:** To evaluate the effect of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for menopause on the mechanical properties of the skin in healthy women. **DESIGN:** A group of 114 women, including 43 nonmenopausal controls, 46 menopausal women with HRT and 25 menopausal women without HRT, participated in the study. Mechanical properties of the skin were measured on the volar forearm using a computerized suction device. **SETTING:** University medical center. Research laboratory in bioengineering and biometry. **RESULTS:** Computerized measurements of skin deformability and viscoelasticity revealed differences between the three groups of women. A steep increase in skin extensibility was evidenced during the perimenopause in untreated women. HRT appeared to limit the age-related increase in cutaneous extensibility, thereby exerting a preventive effect on skin slackness. No effect of HRT was found on other parameters of skin viscoelasticity. **CONCLUSION:** HRT has a beneficial effect on some mechanical properties of skin and thus may slow the progress of intrinsic cutaneous aging.

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