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Ovarian hormones-estrogens, androgens, and progesterone-produce a myriad of effects in the nervous system. The effects of androgens in the brain are mediated through androgen-specific receptors and by the aromatization of testosterone to estradiol. Alterations in the circulating levels of androgens play an important role in psychologic and sexual changes that occur after menopause. The effects of short-term estrogen therapy in improving psychologic symptoms, maintaining vaginal lubrication, decreasing vaginal atrophy, and increasing pelvic blood flow in postmenopausal women are well documented. However, some patients require more than estrogen alone to improve psychologic dysfunction, decreased sexual desire, or other sexual problems associated with menopause. Results from clinical studies show that hormone replacement therapy with estrogen plus androgens provides greater improvement in psychologic (eg, lack of concentration, depression, and fatigue) and sexual (eg, decreased libido and inability to have an orgasm) symptoms than does estrogen alone in naturally and surgically menopausal women.

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