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V.1 A Randomised Pilot Study of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) in Breast Cancer Patients: the Combined Effects of Tamoxifen and HRT on the Endometrium

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THE ACTION of tamoxifen in increasing the risk of benign and malignant disease has been attributed to its partial oestrogen agonist activity. We have investigated whether these endometrial changes are modified by the addition of sequential oestrogen/progestogen HRT.

100 postmenopausal women with climateric symptoms and early stage breast cancer were randomised to receive HRT (Nuvelle, Schering Healthcare) or no HRT for 6 months. 60 women had an intact uterus; 29 were current tamoxifen users (median duration of use 24 months, range 5–54 months) and 16 of these were randomised to receive Nuvelle. 31 ($n = 17$), were not using tamoxifen or ex-tamoxifen users ($n = 14$) and 16 received Nuvelle.

Endometrial thickness (ET) and uterine vascular resistance were measured pretreatment and at 6 months. At baseline, current tamoxifen users had a greater ET (median 6.7 mm, range 2.5–42 versus 3.0 mm, range 1.3–14.0, $P < 0.001$). Current tamoxifen use however, did not appear to influence uterine vascular resistance and the two groups were comparable for this index. Pretreatment, 15 women had an ET > 8 mm (11 were current tamoxifen users) and were referred for hysteroscopy and D&C. No hyperplasia, atypia or carcinoma was diagnosed but 6 women were found to have benign polyps.

The use of HRT did not reduce ET in current tamoxifen users and the uterine vascular resistance was also not reduced in this group. These observations suggest that the activity of tamoxifen may be independent of and more potent than that of the oestrogen, oestradiol valerate 2 mg/day, used in Nuvelle.

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V.2 Use of Levonorgestrel Intrauterine Device for Prevention of Endometrial Changes Induced by Tamoxifen

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The levonorgestrel intrauterine device (LNG-IUD) is a systemic hormonal contraceptive that releases LNG at a steady rate of 20 μg/24 h in the uterine cavity. The exposed endometrium harbours a concentration of LNG which is several times higher than that found following oral administration of that progestogen [1]. Small amounts of the compound escape into the general circulation. © **1998 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.**