

Blood Sciences Department, Clinical Laboratory Medicine

Investigation of the menopause

Women aged over 45 years:

- Laboratory testing (FSH and oestradiol) should not be routinely used in the investigation of the menopause. FSH levels fluctuate prior to the menopause and an FSH result is not required for the diagnosis.
- The perimenopause can be diagnosed based on vasomotor symptoms and irregular periods.
- The menopause can be diagnosed in women who have not had a period for at least 12 months and are not using hormonal contraception (or based on symptoms in women without a uterus).

FSH measurement may assist investigation of the menopause in the following situations:

- **In women aged 40-45 years with menopausal symptoms, including a change to their menstrual cycle.**
 - ◇ FSH >40 IU/L is suggestive of the perimenopause. Menopause can only be confirmed clinically in women who have not had a period for at least 12 months.
- **In women aged under 40 years where premature ovarian insufficiency is suspected.**
 - ◇ If the first FSH result is increased (>40 IU/L), suggest repeat FSH in 4-6 weeks to confirm.

Note that FSH should not be requested in women using combined oestrogen and progestogen contraception or high dose progestogen.

Summary:

In women >45 years, the perimenopause and menopause should be diagnosed clinically. FSH measurement is not required.

FSH measurements may be indicated in women ≤45 years with menopausal symptoms. For further information on the diagnosis and management of the menopause, please refer to NICE NG23.

Reference:

NICE NG23 Menopause: diagnosis and management (<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23>)

For further information or if you have any queries, please contact the Clinical Biochemists:

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