

## Sunnybrook's Chief Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Co-Authors Important Update on Menopause and Osteoporosis

**Toronto, January 26, 2009** – As one of Canada's top experts in women's health and menopause, **Dr. Jennifer Blake, Chief of Obstetrics and Gynaecology** at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, recently co-authored the new clinical guidelines and updated research information about menopause and osteoporosis with a panel of leading experts, challenging myths associated with the risks of hormone therapy.



The updated guidelines and information were commissioned by the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) and have just been published in this month's *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada* (JOGC). The purpose of the recent Update is to review and clarify the use of hormone therapy for postmenopausal symptomatic women, the cardiovascular risks associated with hormone therapy, the breast cancer risks associated with hormone therapy, and hormone therapy and osteoporosis fracture risk evaluation.

"More and more research literature points to the importance of timing with respect to when estrogen use begins and its relation to risks for breast cancer, heart disease and cognitive decline" said Dr. Jennifer Blake, who is also a professor in Ob /Gyn with the University of Toronto. "For example, media reported recently that estrogen supplementation is linked to a greater rate of cognitive decline. We need to look more closely

at that study to see that it pertained to older women who had never received estrogen until age 65. The negative impact was not shown for women who had received estrogen in early menopause."

Canadian demographics reveal that in the next decade, health-care professionals will see the largest population of newly menopausal women ever. In Canada, there are now 2.5 million women between the ages of 45 and 54.

This clinical Update provides new guidance to Canadian women and their health-care providers and addresses many of the controversial issues raised by the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) Study in 2002. The WHI study overemphasized the risks associated with hormone therapy, consequently making women and their health-care providers wary about hormone therapy due to misunderstandings about the actual risks associated with this option.

The Update concluded that hormone therapy does not increase the risk of heart attack in younger women experiencing menopause. The Update also confirmed the debilitating impact that osteoporosis can have on a woman's quality of life. The Update's authors emphasize that even though menopause is a natural transition in a woman's life, there is no "one size fits all approach" when it comes to menopause symptoms or treatments.