

**Moods, Emotions, and Aging:
Hormones and the Mind-Body
Connection**

by Phyllis Bronson, PhD
with Rebecca Bronson
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Phyllis Bronson's book could not have been published at a better time. Brisdelle™ a version of Paxil® or paroxetine, has recently been approved by the FDA as a treatment for hot flashes, despite an advisory committee vote of 10-4 against it. Hot flashes, a symptom of menopause believed to be an effect of hormone deficiencies, may now be treated with a potent and highly addictive SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) that has extremely dangerous side effects, including suicidal thoughts.

It is time for the "silver tsunami" that is the powerful baby boomer demographic to wake up to the fact that we don't have to drug ourselves into oblivion to address the consequences of age-related hormonal changes. Hot flashes are not the result of an SSRI deficiency! There are better answers and we have the power to demand them.

Dr. Bronson's book will equip anyone facing the challenges of hormone deficiencies. Because she works with and writes about real people with serious mood and hormone imbalances, her readers may see themselves in the patient stories she tells and be inspired to take action to resolve their own health issues.

Phyllis Bronson is a rare individual who brings science to practice in her role as a clinical biochemist. Too often, the science and studies are readily available but clinicians don't or won't seek them out. Or, if they do, they are ostracized by their peers for stepping out of the box their medical education has defined for them.

Dr. Bronson asks the hard questions of our organized medical providers:

Why is it that, since the Women's Health Initiative studies (which are discussed at length in the book) revealed signif-

icant problems with the use of Premarin and Prempro, patients are still being prescribed these products albeit in "lower"?

Why, when she has seen women with low estradiol levels resolve their complaint about brain fog within an hour after supplementing with estradiol, are women being offered antidepressant drugs instead of estrogen hormones?

Why, when the bioidentical hormone progesterone has been shown to be protective of nerve tissue and potentially protect against cancer, are women systematically being denied the use of progesterone when their ovaries are removed?

In addition to the hormones made from cholesterol in our bodies (e.g., the sex and adrenal hormones), there are also hormones derived from amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks of the proteins we eat, and they become available to the body when protein is digested.

Dr. Bronson found that it is easy to supplement amino acids such as dopamine and serotonin to help balance hormones. Here's a radical thought: Instead of blocking the metabolism and reuptake of serotonin in the nerve synapse, which is what SSRIs do to raise serotonin levels, what if we supplement the body with the building block amino acids needed to make more serotonin? This is the path Dr. Bronson prefers, and she describes in her book how this has worked successfully for her clients.

Another valuable facet of Dr. Bronson's book is the discussions of how emotional issues can both provoke and be a result of hormone disarray. With the myriad of tools provided in this book, people who may have "lost" themselves emotionally may be able to find a pathway back.

—review by Carol Petersen, RPh, CNP
Women's International Pharmacy