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**Title** Is it me or is it hot in here? Hot Flushes: an unmet need. NCRI Breast CSG Working Group on Symptom Management (Vasomotor)

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**Approval** Yes

**Background** Hot Flushes (vasomotor symptoms) are a serious problem. They impact significantly on daily life and sleep quality, affecting employment, relationships and quality of life. The only effective treatment for hot flushes is oestrogen which is contraindicated in the 75% of breast cancer patients. There are an estimated 550,000 people living in the UK today who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and up to 70% women experience disabling hot flushes after treatment for breast cancer. That's a lot of hot flushes!

**Method** On the initiative of the patient advocate members of the NCRI Breast Clinical Studies Group, a Working Group on Symptom Management has been established and has held its first meeting. Members of the group include representatives from patients, oncology, psychology, gynaecology, acupuncture and the voluntary sector.

**Results** The first tasks of the Working Group was to gauge current clinical practice for hot flushes in cancer. A short questionnaire was developed and circulated to the UK Breast

Intergroup mailing list (about 800 breast cancer health professionals) and to the Breast Cancer Care Nursing Network (about 850 clinical nurse specialists/breast care nurses). The detailed results of the questionnaire will be presented. Briefly, a small number of people were prescribed hormone replacement therapy or Progesterone (Megestrol acetate), more Clonidine and Gabapentin and many selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Although SSRIs have some effect in reducing the intensity of hot flushes, they have significant side effects including sexual dysfunction, in a group of women, many of whom are already suffering sexual problems due to anti-oestrogen drugs or premature menopause. In addition, available treatments (both pharmacological and non-pharmacological) varied across the UK.

**Conclusion** The majority (95%) of respondents to our questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that treatment and management of hot flushes is an unmet need. The questionnaire also demonstrated inequality of access to treatment in the UK.

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**Theme** Diagnosis and therapy

**Invivo** Confirm

**Category** Breast cancer

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**Presenter is available** Yes

**Declaration** Agree

**How do you hear** Previous attendance