PREMATURE OVARIAN FAILURE

Premature Ovarian Failure (POF) occurs in approximately 1 in 100 women aged 30-39 years.

KEY POINTS
1. Apparent ovarian failure may be temporary
2. Episodic ovarian activity may occur

DIAGNOSIS
1. More than four months amenorrhoea after a previously regular cycle.
2. Follicle-Stimulating Hormone (FSH) greater than 40 on two to three occasions taken at least one month apart.

CAUSES
- Idiopathic:
  ➢ Most have a normal karyotype.
  ➢ 50% may have intermittent ovulation
- Autoimmune - Associated with other autoimmune diseases.
- Genetic:
  ➢ A variety are seen - XO, XXX, fragile X, deletions
  ➢ FSH/Luteinising Hormone (LH) receptor abnormalities. These abnormalities make up 40% of primary amenorrhoea woman.
- Iatrogenic:
  ➢ Mainly surgical or radiotherapy
  ➢ A third of POF is after chemotherapy for breast cancer. This may be temporary.
- Infection
  ➢ Rare – varicella-zoster virus, malaria or mumps
- Metabolic - Galactosaemias
INVESTIGATIONS

- Be aware that diagnosis is often delayed because of low index of suspicion and that this puts that patient at risk of osteoporosis.
- Family History of POF and autoimmune disease
- Karyotype all women under 40 years
- Bone mineral density (BMD) - reduced in two thirds of women
- Androgen levels (may be important in BMD) and likely to be reduced
- Repeat annually:
  - Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH)
  - Fasting glucose
  - Adrenal antibodies
- Ovarian antibodies not useful.
- Anti-Nuclear Factor, Rheumatoid Factor
- Fragile X if family history of severe learning disorder
- Pelvic ultrasound if primary amenorrhoea

MANAGEMENT

- Advice regarding POF
- Provide information regarding support services/organisations available. (see www.pofsupport.org)
- Educate regarding hormone replacement therapy. Titrate the dose of oestrogen until symptoms are relieved.
- See every one to two years for new treatment options, mammogram, Pap smear, BMD, TSH, fasting glucose and adrenal antibodies.

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<tr>
<td>National Standards – 1 Clinical Care is Guided by Current Best Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legislation - Nil</td>
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<td>Related Guidelines / Policies – <a href="#">Reproductive Medicine</a></td>
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