

# Treating the male menopause

Dr Malcolm Carruthers set up the first andropause clinic in the UK. Here he explains why

## What is the male menopause?

Between the ages of 45 and 55, many men suffer a characteristic pattern of symptoms including loss of drive, energy, libido and potency, depression not responding to conventional medication, night sweats, and pain and stiffness in the hands and feet.

About half of men may be affected, and the incidence of problems such as impotence increases with age. This is the male menopause, also known as the male climacteric or andropause.

The age of onset can be earlier than 45, particularly in the presence of pre-disposing factors such as stress, excess alcohol consumption, vasectomy and infections that damage the testis, including adult mumps, glandular fever and non-specific urethritis.

The cause is a fall in the level of free, active testosterone, rather than of total testosterone. Of the first 400 patients attending the Gold Cross Medical Centre with andropausal symptoms, only 12 per cent had low total testosterone.

The andropause literature goes back to 1944, when the *Journal of the American Medical Association* described the condition, the cause of which was confirmed by measuring raised urinary gonad-



Dr Malcolm Carruthers: 'As with HRT for women, testosterone is being shown to have many beneficial effects on men's health.'

treatment is usually worthwhile even above this level.

## What does treatment involve?

In most cases, treatment with

are sometimes implanted into the buttock. Six to 10 pellets of 200mg provide safe control of symptoms for six months. Some patients have had this form of treatment for up to 50

years. There are some symptoms that seem to be related to it, the opportunity should be taken to do a general health review.

As well as a full history, this would ideally include a

## Abridged CV

**Name:** Dr Malcolm Carruthers  
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**Testosterone treatment produces a**