“Effect of Hot Flushes on Vascular Function: A Randomized Controlled Trial”
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1. Review the criteria for “tolerable” and “intolerable” hot flushes. On what basis were these criteria chosen? Were the criteria chosen prior to data collection? If yes, why were these particular thresholds selected? If no, what impact does post hoc categorization have on the reliability of the authors’ conclusions? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of comparing two groups of patients (those with “intolerable” and “tolerable” hot flushes) rather than exploring correlations between the outcomes of interest and continuous independent variables (eg, Hot Flush Weekly Weighted Score) from all study participants.

2. Discuss each exclusion criterion. Explain why each criterion was chosen for the study design. Discuss how each criterion affects generalizability to your patient population.

3. How many observers measured endpoints for this study? How did the authors prove consistency of the measurements among the observers? If you were to design the study, how would you demonstrate consistency of the measurements?

4. On what basis were the hormone therapy regimens, dosages, and duration of treatment chosen? Do the data in this paper support equivalent biological efficacy of the estrogen treatments across groups? If not, should any of the authors’ conclusions regarding route of administration be revised?

5. Review the authors’ previous publication for more information on pulse wave analysis in postmenopausal women (Tuomikoski P, Ebert P, Groop P-H, Haapalahti P, Hautamäki H, Rönnback M, Ylikorkala O, Mikkola TS. Evidence for a role of hot flushes in vascular function in recently postmenopausal women. Obstet Gynecol 2009;113:902-8). Discuss the utility of pulse wave analysis of the radial artery for estimating risk for cardiovascular disease. Review the results observed in the present study and discuss their clinical significance.

6. Read the UpToDate® publication titled “Postmenopausal Hormone Therapy and Cardiovascular Risk” and the ACOG Committee Opinion titled “Hormone Therapy and Heart Disease” (ACOG Committee Opinion No. 420. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Obstet Gynecol 2008;112:1189–92). Explain how the authors’ data presented in this paper support or challenge the conclusions of these reviews.

7. Have the authors’ observations changed how you will counsel a postmenopausal woman with “tolerable” hot flushes? A woman with “intolerable” hot flushes? Why or why not?