

Endocrine System Diseases and Disorders

The following are diseases and disorders of the endocrine system:

Addison's Syndrome

Hypo-secretion of glucocorticoids (adrenal cortex) > Signs and symptoms include hypoglycaemia, leading to muscular atrophy and weakness, mental lethargy, weight loss, hypotension and dehydration (due to decreased blood sodium levels), gastric problems, irregular menstruation.

Cushing's Syndrome

Hyper-secretion of glucocorticoids, particularly cortisol and cortisone. It is characterised by redistribution of fat leading to muscular atrophy (spindly legs), "moon face", "buffalo hump", pendulous abdomen, hypertension, easy bruising, poor wound healing, osteoporosis and sometimes mental illness.

Amenorrhoea

Absence of menstruation. Primarily due to endocrine disorders usually in the hypothalamus or pituitary. Secondary cause due to extreme changes in body weight, i.e. anorexia to obesity, or deficiencies in pituitary or ovarian hormones. Also hyper-secretion of testosterone (in females), anaemia, stress.

Pre-menstrual Syndrome

Severe physical and emotional stress occurring late in the post ovulatory phase of the menstrual cycle and sometimes overlapping with menstruation. Signs and symptoms are irritability, depression, irrationality, oedema, swollen and tender breasts.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

Hyper-secretion of the female sex hormones. Irregular menstrual cycle, multiple growth of follicular cysts and thus enlarged ovaries, often infertility. It may cause obesity.

HRT

Hormone Replacement Therapy to reduce or prevent the effects of the menopause. It reduces the likelihood of osteoporosis and heart attack. There is an increased likelihood of hormonally driven carcinoma.

Stress

Adrenaline and noradrenaline levels rise. Cortisol levels rise, followed by a drop as the gland is exhausted. Prolactin and growth hormone levels decrease. In women: amenorrhoea, menstrual problems, PMS,

menopause problems, possibly fertility problems. In men: reduced libido, low sperm production and impotence. In general: diabetes and tearfulness.