

writes: "Now there's millions of men over there at the front in Belgium and millions

values of ipics

sees something moving there. for Culture, who have family links to Not a German, not a cow, but a Passchendaele, including Peter Welsby, of-war camps," said Welsby.

Menopause charities linked to US-based HRT company

JEFF SPICER/MARK BRUCE

Andrew Gilligan
Several of Britain's leading charities for menopausal women have been accused of acting as "front organisations" for an American drugs company, promoting the controversial hormone replacement therapy (HRT).
Mylan, which makes Britain's market-leading HRT treatment, has established close and often undisclosed links to a number of charities whose websites are supportive of HRT and downplay its links with breast cancer.

The website of one of the charities, the Daisy Network, is edited by Katie Seward, who is Mylan's UK brand manager for its HRT portfolio. Seward is also a trustee of the Daisy Network.

The Daisy Network does not disclose Seward's job, stating merely that she works in "the healthcare industry".
The BBC Newsnight presenter Kirsty Wark last month spoke at a seminar on the menopause and HRT co-organised by the charity. The event was hosted by Julie Etchingham, the ITV News presenter.

The Daisy Network, which helps younger women undergoing the menopause - a condition known as premature ovarian insufficiency (POI) - publishes advice saying: "In women with POI, HRT is safe.

Studies have shown that HRT in women with POI does not increase the risk of breast cancer."

Another charity, the British Menopause Society (BMS), also advises in favour of HRT, saying: "Healthy women younger than 60 years should not be concerned about the safety profile of HRT."

A fact sheet for the public issued by its patient arm, Women's Health Concern, states: "Users can be reassured... If women start HRT around the time of menopause, the risk is very small."
HRT can bring significant benefits to women suffering from symptoms of the menopause, but it also carries risks.

Cancer Research UK told The Sunday Times it was "deeply concerned" at any implication that HRT was completely safe or that the risks were small.
A major study last year by the Institute for Cancer Research was the latest of many to find that

Wark: seminar on menopause

About 1m women in the UK use hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to manage the symptoms of the menopause. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (Nice) says that many more could benefit but have been scared off by studies showing health risks, particularly of breast and ovarian cancer.
However, guidance in 2015 sent out a clear message that the



Sarah-Kate Templeton
Don't let the doomsayers scare you

taking combined HRT is associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.

Professor Anthony Swerdlow, who led the research, told The Sunday Times: "Our study found that [the risk] was probably larger than in much of the literature and was in the order of two to three times raised." Asked if such a risk could be described as "very small", he said: "I would describe that as substantial or appreciable."
The BMS has received tens of thousands of pounds in sponsorship from Mylan, or companies it now owns, and at least one other HRT manufacturer.

The BMS's chairwoman until this year, Dr Heather Currie, runs a commercial website, Menopause Matters, that has also received thousands of pounds from Mylan.

Earlier this year Wark presented a BBC programme involving Currie and the BMS. "Discovering Heather was on HRT

benefits of the therapy outweigh the risks. HRT can relieve most symptoms of menopause, including debilitating hot flushes, night sweats, mood swings, vaginal dryness and reduced sex drive. For some, symptoms are unbearable. Women turned away from HRT in droves after two big studies in 2002 and 2003. The number of prescriptions for the therapy in the UK almost halved.

was an absolute eye-opener for me," Wark said at the time. "The US study that prompted me to come off HRT has been considerably revised and HRT only increases the risk of breast cancer if you are already predisposed. I'm back on a small dose and think I'm starting to see my sleep improve."

Wark and Etchingham could not be reached for comment. There is no suggestion that they were aware of the HRT industry's links with the BMS or the Daisy Network.

Currie said her advice was in line with guidance from Nice, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. She said she always openly declared her links with Mylan and other companies on her website and when giving lectures. The payments had not influenced her or the BMS in any way, she said.

The Daisy Network said it had "acted completely transparently and honestly at all times".

Dr Alex May, a scientific researcher who uncovered the issue, said: "The menopause charities must not be front organisations for the pharmaceutical industry."

A Mylan spokesman said: "Mylan has a clear conflict of interest policy and is not aware of any breach of [it] by any individual employee or at a corporate level."

Nice says that taking combined HRT (oestrogen and progestogen) is associated with a small increased risk of breast cancer.

Some studies have suggested that for every 1,000 women taking combined HRT there will be about five extra cases of breast cancer. This would be an increase from 22 cases per 1,000 menopausal women to 27.

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