Twitter Thread by Victoria Freeman



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When my ovaries failed prematurely & I suffered full force of absence of hormones on body & mind 1 thing which struck me was total lack of discussion in feminism about what was happening to me. I realised feminism had v little to say about loss of ovarian function in general



What I could find were lectures on accepting this loss of function & its devastating panoply of mental & physical impairments because it was "natural". These lectures were usually delivered by older women, younger feminists had nothing to say. I presumed it prompted the ick.

Which is how society in general responds. It wants you to shut up, stop being so hysterical. Accept your lot! Despite premature ovarian failure, & appropriately timed menopause, intersecting with class to deliver an absolute gut punch of inequality.

When I talk about this stuff on here I get very little engagement. Feminists are no more likely than the general population to have an interest. Men are wont to respond with what I presume is disgust & just hope you stop talking about it as soon as possible.

You don't get star columnists or high profile QCs jostling to take on the cause of women who face a life of premature morbidity & even premature mortality as well as exclusionary social effects because their ovaries packed up early doors & the NHS provides v limited care.

This is how I came to the issue of hormone blockers. I knew when my ovaries stopped producing the hormones I required the effects I experienced were truly astonishing. This isn't hyperbole. My body desperately needed oestrogen.

A bone scan revealed the few short years in which I had had insufficient oestrogen had wrought a devastating effect on my bones. I had osteopenia which could mean facing an older age of disabling fractures & breaks from minor events like coughing.

But what was happening to my brain was the scariest part. The brain is packed with oestrogen receptors. It needs oestrogen to function properly. Being articulate was my thing & here I was frequently unable to form sentences. I was also in the grip of anxiety & depression.

Oestrogen is vital in the process of so many bodily functions. So it concerned that the blocking of sex hormones in a developing body could have similar effects. I went hunting for research, genuinely hoping to be wrong, but I found I was right to be concerned.

NHS draws particular attention to risks of blocking hormones in adolescence to bone & brain development. The mental health effects even carry a risk of boosting gender dysphoria.

Yet here we are being told we are "hysterical" by the cool girl "feminist" who is unutterably bored by it all. Unfortunately feminism is far from immune to the sexual competition which tries to consign middle aged women to the bin.

Hormone health is an area where natal women & the trans community should be able to link arms in a fight to access good & timely care. It's a just fight. This doesn't mean pretending there aren't risks to this care. It means understanding those risks.