

Careful Listening and a Practical Approach to Hand and Upper Extremity Challenges in Women

By Colleen Fahey

THERE ARE MANY health issues specific to women and even more that are specific to perimenopausal and postmenopausal women. Osteoarthritis, rheumatoid and other inflammatory arthritic conditions, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and fractures are more common in women than in men.

Linda Stanley, certified hand therapist and founder of The Institute for Hand and Upper Extremity Rehabilitation, provides patient-centric therapy for women with hand and upper extremity conditions.

“We listen carefully to patients regarding their specific difficulties and symptoms,” says Stanley. “We make sure to abolish the ‘no pain, no gain’ attitude and alleviate fears by educating patients throughout their therapy, starting from the initial phone consultation.”

As women age, these and other hand and upper extremity conditions become more prevalent. Aside from injuries due to falling — which can lead to fractures of the wrist and upper arm — many women experience pain and changes in strength. Tennis elbow, arthritic changes in the base of the thumbs, carpal tunnel syndrome and hormone fluctuations, to name a few, can affect daily activities for women. Thorough patient assessment



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followed by various treatments such as the use of ultrasound, massage, exercise, splinting, injections and, most importantly, education conserves and improves strength and function of the hands and upper extremities while contributing to the development of a relationship between patient and therapist.

“Communication with patients and close consultation with their physicians is critical for best patient outcomes. Primary care physicians and gynecologists become advocates for

their patients by probing for more information when patients display related symptoms identified during routine exams,” says Stanley. “Our clinic is not limited to women’s hand and upper extremity concerns. We meet the needs of all patients with upper extremity problems, and it is our mission to address each patient’s individual functional needs for optimal care and patient satisfaction.”

Linda Stanley founded the Institute for Hand and Upper Extremity Rehabilitation in Fountainville, PA, in 2001 and the Quakertown office in 2006. She graduated from Temple University with a Bachelor of Science degree in occupational therapy in 1984 and began working exclusively in hand and upper extremity therapy in 1989. After completing her hand therapy certification in 1991, she worked as a contract therapist and developed relationships with renowned physicians from Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley. For more information, call (215) 348-9549 or visit www.handinstitute.com.

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