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# Pill that stops you getting in a sweat

LAURA MILNE reports on a new low-cost therapy for treating hyperhidrosis

**F**OR YEARS the prospect of socialising with her friends, days out with husband Robert and even pottering around the garden filled Betty Glennie with dread. It wasn't that the 71-year-old retired saleswoman didn't want to go out. Her life was blighted by chronic excessive sweating or hyperhidrosis.

The condition is thought to affect more than two per cent of the population but its true prevalence is unknown because those affected tend not to seek help.

Only 38 per cent of sufferers have discussed the problem with a doctor.

Most commonly affecting the armpits, hands, feet or face it can also affect the entire body and hit any age group. One in four sufferers has a family history of the disorder, suggesting a genetic link.

"People underestimate the huge impact hyperhidrosis can have on a person's life," says GP Angelika Razzaque. "It can affect a person's work and social life as well as their relationship with their partner."

In Betty's case, her symptoms were so acute she was too embarrassed to see friends, leaving her feeling depressed and isolated.

"It was terrible," she says. "My hair would be dripping as though I had just stepped out of the shower and I used to have to put kitchen roll and a towel around my neck."

Treatment of hyperhidrosis usually begins with powerful prescription antiperspirants or injections using botulinum toxin. However the treatment has to be repeated every

two to eight months and is not widely available on the NHS.

New laser therapies are also emerging to destroy glands, with the final option for many being surgery.

Betty's life improved dramatically when she was referred to a dermatologist who suggested a new oral treatment called Pro-Banthine. The pill starts working within an hour by blocking the signals from the brain to the sweat glands. It is available on the NHS and can be prescribed by a GP or dermatologist.

"Within days the sweating stopped," says Betty. "It has given me a new lease of life."

● For more information visit [nhs.uk/conditions/hyperhidrosis](http://nhs.uk/conditions/hyperhidrosis)



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**IMPACT:** Excessive sweating can have a huge effect on everyday living