

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Modern methods of oral treatment of erectile dysfunction

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Erectile dysfunction (ED) is defined as a temporary or permanent inability to obtain or maintain erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual intercourse. ED is not considered to be a genuine disease, it is rather a symptom accompanying other systemic diseases. Almost 52 per cent of men claim erectile dysfunction of different degree, however, only 5–10 per cent of them would confirm their handicap. Key words: erectile dysfunction, sexual life, oral treatment of erectile dysfunction.

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is defined as a temporary or permanent inability to obtain or maintain erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual intercourse. ED is not considered to be a genuine disease, it is rather a symptom accompanying other systemic diseases. Almost 52 per cent of men claim erectile dysfunction of different degree, however, only 5–10 per cent of them would admit their handicap. The value of sexual life in the scale of other human life values is high, just behind the values of health, love, friendship and children, however, it is considered to be much more important than money or professional success. Identification of men suffering from erectile dysfunction is of extraordinary importance also because of the fact that erectile dysfunction may be the first sign of otherwise asymptomatic severe system diseases such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, coronary heart disease or certain malignant diseases.

Erectile dysfunction influences significantly men's self esteem, relationship with their partners, may lead to significant personal problems, depression and social isolation.

The choice of most appropriate ED treatment depends on several factors: on ED etiopathogenesis, personal preferences, patient's age, comorbidity, religious and ethnic aspects. Therapy of ED must at the same time fulfil some medical criteria. It must be simple, non-invasive, painless, highly efficient with minimum negative adverse events. Oral treatment of ED fulfils all of these criteria and, at present, it is considered the gold standard and for majority of patients with ED it is the first choice of treatment. The drugs utilized in oral treatment of ED act either centrally by stimulating the dopaminergic receptors in

the paraventricular and preoptic nuclei of the hypothalamus (apomorphin – Uprima) or peripherally in the corpora cavernosa by inhibiting the enzyme phosphodiesterase-5 (sildenafil – Viagra, tadalafil – Cialis, vardenafil – Levitra). Thus, metabolic degradation of cyclic guanosine-monophosphate, catabolized by PDE-5, is blocked, cGMP can accumulate in cavernosal smooth muscle cells and upon sexual stimulation lead to development of erection. The efficacy of all PDE-5 inhibitors is comparable, they differ from each other in the duration of action and incidence and severity of side effects.

Received April 20, 2003.

Accepted May 23, 2003.

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This report was presented on the Meeting of Slovak Medical Society in Bratislava.