

New study reveals mixed picture on the effectiveness of Viagra and related drugs

April 7 2015, by Deborah Linton



Viagra and other related drugs are not a universal 'cure-all' for impotence, according to a new study from The University of Manchester and NatCen Social Research.

Drugs, clinically known as oral phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors (PDE5i), have become the first-line medical treatment option for sufferers of [erectile dysfunction](#) (ED) – also known as impotence - since entering the UK market in 1998.

An abundance of studies has demonstrated the effectiveness of such drugs. But researchers at The University of Manchester, who have studied the responses of more than 2,600 English men (aged 50-87 years), suggest that restoring ED pharmacologically is not a 'cure-all'.

Lead author of the study, Dr David Lee, found that older sufferers of ED who had used Viagra, or similar drugs such as Cialis and Levitra, still expressed concern or [dissatisfaction](#) with their sex lives.

The paper, entitled Erectile dysfunction and phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitor use: associations with sexual activities, function and satisfaction in a population sample of [older men](#), is published in the *International Journal of Impotence Research*.

Dr Lee, Age UK Research Fellow at The University of Manchester, said: "Opportunities are clearly being missed to improve treatment outcomes, with our nationally-representative data showing that gains relating to sexual activity and function are not mirrored by lower levels of concern and dissatisfaction with [sexual health](#) and relationships.

"It is important that health professionals act on this and offer a more rounded approach to managing ED. This should include a well-informed patient with realistic expectations, support from his partner, and an improved assessment of any psychological or relationship issues that may exacerbate sexual concerns and dissatisfaction.

"We also found that PDE5i users and those men with untreated ED were more likely to report [high blood pressure](#) and diabetes. Clinicians should be open to discussing with male patients the potential side effects on erectile function of commonly prescribed medications for chronic conditions such as hypertension and type 2 diabetes."

Data for the study was taken from the latest wave of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA). Research found that older men who had recently used PDE5i drugs reported higher levels of sexual activity and function than men without ED, but were more likely to be concerned and/or dissatisfied with their sex lives.

Of more than 2,600 50-87-year-old males, 7% reported using a PDE5i [drug](#) to enhance their erections over the past three months, while 21% reported that they had untreated ED.

Although 80% of PDE5i users reported the drugs having a positive effect on their sex lives, when compared to those men without ED, they consistently reported higher levels of concern and dissatisfaction with various aspects of their [sexual activity](#), function and relationships.

Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK, said: "This research helps us to build a better understanding of older men's concerns and needs around sexual health. With an ageing population it is important that providers of sexual health services understand the needs of older people in both clinical settings and when developing information and advice so this serves as another useful insight."

More information: "Erectile dysfunction and phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitor use: associations with sexual activities, function and satisfaction in a population sample of older men Erectile dysfunction and phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitor use: associations with sexual activities, function and satisfaction in a population sample of older men." *Int J Impot Res.* 2015 Mar 26. doi: 10.1038/ijir.2015.4

Provided by University of Manchester

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