

POM Wonderful 100% Pomegranate Juice may improve erectile dysfunction

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According to a pilot study released in the International Journal of Impotence Research, POM Wonderful 100% Pomegranate Juice was found to have beneficial effects on erectile dysfunction (ED), a disorder that affects 1 in 10 men worldwide and 10 to 30 million men in the United States alone.^{1, 2} ED can be caused by several factors, including arterial plaque, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, nerve damage, endocrine imbalance or depression. Ultimately, ED is a condition that affects the blood flow to the penis during sexual stimulation.

This randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind, crossover pilot study examined the efficacy of pomegranate juice versus placebo in improving erections in 61 male subjects. To qualify, participants had to experience mild to moderate ED for at least 3 months; be in a stable, monogamous relationship with a consenting female partner; and be willing to attempt sexual intercourse on at least one occasion per week during each study period.

Mild ED is defined as the mildly decreased ability to get and keep an erection, while moderate ED is the moderately decreased ability to get and keep an erection. The majority of men with ED have moderate ED.

For the first four weeks of the study, the subjects were assigned to drink either 8 oz. of POM Wonderful Pomegranate Juice or 8 oz. of placebo beverage daily with their evening meal or shortly after. After a two-week

washout period during which the subjects did not consume any study beverage nor utilize any ED treatment, they were assigned to drink 8 oz. of the opposite study beverage every evening for another four weeks. At the end of each four week period, efficacy was assessed using the International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF) and Global Assessment Questionnaires (GAQ). The IIEF is a validated questionnaire that has been demonstrated to correlate with ED intensity. The GAQ elicits the patient's self-evaluation of the study beverages' effect on erectile activity.

Forty seven percent of the subjects reported that their erections improved with POM Wonderful Pomegranate Juice, while only 32% reported improved erections with the placebo ($p=0.058$). These results compare favorably to a recent 24-week study using a PDE5 inhibitor (such as Cialis), in which roughly 73% of subjects reported a benefit from the PDE5 inhibitor and 26% reported a "placebo effect" (i.e. experiencing improvement while on the placebo).³

Although the study did not achieve overall statistical significance, the authors conclude that additional studies with more patients and longer treatment periods may in fact reach statistical significance. The strong directional results of this pilot study are encouraging because almost half of the test subjects experienced a benefit simply by adding pomegranate juice to their daily diet, without the use of ED drugs.

Researchers believe that the results might be due to the potent antioxidant content of pomegranate juice, which can prevent free radical molecules from disrupting proper circulatory function. In several previously published medical studies, pomegranate juice has been shown to enhance blood flow and to slow or reverse arterial plaque growth.^{4, 5, 6} Because an erection requires significant blood flow, these potent pomegranate antioxidants may provide benefit by mitigating arterial plaque and promoting blood vessel dilation.

According to study co-author Harin Padma-Nathan, MD, FACS, FRCS, Clinical Professor of Urology at the Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, “These findings are very encouraging as they suggest there is a non-invasive, non-drug way to potentially alleviate this quality of life issue that affects so many men. For men with ED, it is important to maintain a healthy diet and exercise. Drinking pomegranate juice daily could be an important addition to the diet in the management of this condition.”

Source: POM Wonderful

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