

Severe gum disease, impotence may be linked

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Men younger than 30, over 70 at particular risk, study shows.

(HealthDay) -- Men with severe gum disease, known as periodontitis, are at greater risk for impotence, according to a new study that finds young men and the elderly at particular risk.

The researchers from Taiwan used data from a large study to identify almost 33,000 men with erectile dysfunction and randomly selected about 162,000 men without this condition.

Of these [study participants](#), about 12 percent had periodontitis. This group with [gum disease](#) included about 27 percent of the men with erectile dysfunction and about 9 percent of those without [sexual problems](#). The men were followed for five years.

The study found gum disease was much more prevalent among the men

with erectile dysfunction than the [control group](#). After taking into account other [lifestyle factors](#), such as income and pre-existing medical conditions, the researchers found gum disease was still linked to impotence, particularly in men younger than 30 and those older than 70.

"Understanding all aspects of how and why a [health condition](#) occurs is vital to prevention and treatment goals," said Dr. Tobias Kohler, a member of the American Urology Association Public Media Committee, in a committee news release. "This new study demonstrates how seemingly unrelated conditions can in fact be connected, underscoring the need for further research and education."

The study did not show that gum disease causes [impotence](#), merely that an association exists between the two.

One expert put forth a theory on a potential link between diseased gums and erectile dysfunction.

"I think the link between erectile dysfunction and gum disease is likely due to inflammation in the body, and the damage in the blood vessels supplying the penis," said Dr. Aaron Katz, chairman of the department of urology at Winthrop-University Hospital in Mineola, NY. He added that men who have periodontitis should avail themselves of good dental care to help address the problem.

The researchers are from the Far Eastern Memorial Hospital and the Herng-Ching Lin School of Health Care Administration at Taipei Medical University. The study was to be presented Monday at a meeting of the American Urological Association, in Atlanta.

Data and conclusions presented at meetings should be considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed medical journal.

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health provides more information on [gum disease](#).

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