

SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION AND ANTIDEPRESSANT MEDICATIONS IN MALE DEPRESSED PATIENTSD. Karaiskos¹, E. Tzavellas¹, I. Elias², I. Liappas¹, A. Liappas³, T. Paparrigopoulos¹¹Psychiatry, Eginition Hospital of Athens, Athens, Greece ; ²Endocrinology, Elena Venizelou Hospital, Athens, Greece ; ³Pharmacology, University of Athens School of Medicine, Athens, Greece**Introduction**

Sexual dysfunction, such as low libido, erectile dysfunction and anorgasmia, is very common in patients taking serotonergic antidepressants (SSRIs). These adverse effects persist throughout the treatment period, are not self-limited, and drive many male patients to treatment discontinuation in order to recuperate normal sexual functioning.

Objectives - Aims

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the sexual function of male patients treated with antidepressants for major depression, before initiation of treatment, during treatment and two months following withdrawal of SSRIs.

Methods

This observational study comprised 25 male patients (age: 30-50 years) followed-up on an outpatient basis for major depression.

Sexual functioning was assessed with the Arizona Sexual Experience Scale (ASEX) and depressive symptoms with the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HDRS) at three time points: baseline (period free of medication), three months after starting treatment with SSRIs, and two months following antidepressant discontinuation.

Paired samples t-tests were used for comparisons between numeric variables at the three time points and Spearman's correlation coefficients were calculated between factors associated with sexual dysfunction.

Results

Mean values \pm SD of ASEX and HDRS scores at the initial, second and final assessment are shown in Table 1.

	Initial assessment	Second assessment	Final assessment
ASEX	17.8 \pm 5.4	25.6 \pm 7.9*	12.9 \pm 5.8**
HDRS	22.3 \pm 4.2	4.2 \pm 3.4*	7.3 \pm 5.2**

Correlation coefficients between ASEX, HDRS and age at the three points of evaluation are presented in Table 2.

	ASEX 1		ASEX 2		ASEX 3
	Spearman's rho		Spearman's rho		Spearman's rho
	Sig. (2-tailed)		Sig. (2-tailed)		Sig. (2-tailed)
HDRS 1	0.775	HDRS 2	0.318	HDRS 3	0.719
	<0.05		0.340		<0.005
Age	0.842	Age	0.554	Age	0.856
	<0.05		0.062		<0.05

Conclusions

Antidepressants (SSRIs) have a negative impact on sexual functioning of male depressed patients. Quality of sexual functioning is negatively associated with age and the severity of depressive symptoms before the administration of antidepressant treatment. Sexual functioning significantly improves after discontinuation of antidepressants; this improvement is even superior to the pre-treatment period of sexual functioning.