Title: Hypoactive Sexual Desire

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Abstract:
This Patient Education Tool addresses the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment for hypoactive sexual desire while raising awareness of patients to its commonality. Hopefully, this patient education tool will demonstrate to patients that there are alternatives to medications and that they should seek counsel in their doctor if they are having any type of concern about their sexual situation.

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What is Hypoactive Sexual Drive Disorder?
- A persistent or recurrent lack of interest in sex that causes you personal distress.
- The lack of desire should not be better accounted for by another factor such as a mental disorder, a side effect from a medication, or another medical condition.

Subtypes:
- General: a general lack of desire
- Situational: a lack of desire in particular situations
- Acquired: normal period of desire prior to development of a lack of desire
- Lifelong: lifelong lack of desire

There is a natural fluctuation in a woman’s sexual desire.
Highs and lows tend to coincide with major life changes such as pregnancy, menopause, illness in yourself, or even illness in your partner.

When to seek medical advice
Talk to your doctor if your level of sexual desire is becoming concerning to you, whether you are sexually active or not.

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Please remember it is not necessary to feel you do not meet diagnostic criteria to talk to your doctor about your questions or concerns.

A Patient Education Tool
Sexual desire is based on many components
- Physical well-being, Emotional well-being, Experiences, Beliefs, Current relationship

Physical Causes
- Sexual problems, medical diseases, medications, fatigue, alcohol and drugs, surgery

Hormonal Causes
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Menopause

Psychological Causes
- Mental health problems, stress, poor body image, low self-esteem, history of physical or sexual abuse

Relationship Causes
- Lack of connectivity, unresolved conflicts, poor communication of sexual needs or preferences, infidelity or breach of trust

Symptoms
- Low or absent desire for sex
- Infrequent and maybe even absent sexual activity
- Resultant distress associated with the lack of desire and satisfaction with sexual activity

Diagnosis
- Assess effects of prescribed and over the counter medications
- Look for undiagnosed medical conditions such as diabetes or high blood pressure
- Assess for thinning of genital tissues, vaginal dryness or pain-triggering spots on pelvic exam
- Questionnaires may help pinpoint the level of desire or reason for low desire

Treatment
Hypoactive sexual drive must be approached with multiple methods of therapy. These include:

Lifestyle Changes
- Regular exercise
- Address your stress
- Work on personal well-being and happiness
- Strengthen pelvic floor muscles

Medical Treatments
- Address underlying medical conditions or medications that could be contributing
- Estrogen therapy in the form of a vaginal cream or ring or a patch
- Testosterone therapy in the form of a patch. Side effects include increased risk of facial hair and acne. Treatment with testosterone continues to be controversial, and there is unclear evidence for its association with breast cancer.

Relationship Changes
- Communicate openly and honestly
- Speak with a sex therapist or counselor
- Make time for intimacy
- Spice up your sex life