

Title: SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) and Sexual Side Effects in Women

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Abstract: Women on SSRIs may experience sexual side effects. There are a variety of ways to deal with these effects. Sildenafil is one medication that may help ameliorate these side effects.

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Are my sexual symptoms from depression or from my medication?

Sexual dysfunction is a common problem among women. Between 30-50% of women experience sexual dysfunction. It has a variety of causes, including depression and various medications. Many women may feel hesitant to bring up this subject with their doctors. However, bringing up sexual dysfunction can help your doctor give you the best care possible.

Women who are depressed may experience loss of interest in activities that they used to enjoy. Sexual dysfunction can be a symptom of depression, especially Major Depressive Disorder.

You may wish to think back and try to remember whether your symptoms started before you began taking your medication. If they did, it is likely that the symptoms are a part of your depression and may be helped by continuing on your antidepressant medication.

Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about your sexual health or functioning. There is help- Things can get better!



Resources

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs): MayoClinic.com
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/ssris/MH00066/METHOD=print>

Antidepressants: Which Cause the Fewest Sexual Side Effects?: MayoClinic.com
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/antidepressants/AN01739/METHOD=print>

Sexual dysfunction in women: MD Consult
http://www.mdconsult.com.floyd.lib.u.mn.edu/das/pdxmd/body/104049969-3/744376203?type=med&eid=9-u1.0-1_mt_1016356

Nurnberg et al. Sildenafil treatment of women with antidepressant-associated sexual dysfunction. JAMA. 2008; 300(4): 395-404.

Segreaves, R. Sexual dysfunction associated with antidepressant therapy. Urology Clinics of North America, 2007, 34:575-579

SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) and Sexual Side Effects in Women

What you need to know



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Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors and Sexual Side Effects in Women

Examples of SSRIs

Citalopram (Celexa)

Escitalopram (Lexapro)

Fluoxetine (Prozac)

Paroxetine (Paxil)

Sertraline (Zoloft)

SSRIs can help treat depression

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) are an important tool in treating depression. They are antidepressant medications that work in the nervous system to affect the transport of serotonin, one of the chemicals thought to be responsible for depression. SSRIs often have fewer side effects than older antidepressants. However, like all medications, SSRIs may occasionally have side effects. If you experience side effects, talk with your doctor about the best course of action.

What are some common sexual side effects of SSRIs?

Some women experience one or more of the following side effects. If you are concerned about any of these, talk with your doctor:

-Decreased libido (lessened interest in sex)

-Difficulty with arousal or lubrication

-Not having an orgasm (or having difficulty having an orgasm)



What are my options if I am having side effects?

Depression is a real disease that can impact your life in many ways. Treating your depression is important for your well-being. Instead of stopping your SSRI suddenly, your doctor may suggest any of the following:

-Switching to another SSRI: Each person reacts differently to each particular SSRI.

-Switching to another type of antidepressant medication

-Psychological counseling as an alternative to taking an antidepressant

-Medication to treat sexual side effects: Studies show that sildenafil, bupropion, or buspirone may help with these side effects

-Discontinuing your medication gradually or decreasing the dose

Regardless of the treatment option you choose, it is important that you continue to care for yourself by treating your depression.