

Low Dose Viagra as a Preventive Solution for Stroke, Heart Attack and Physical Stamina, in Addition to Mental Revitalization in Middle Aged Men

Behare Agai

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“Older men, with the help of Viagra and lighter gravity, have been known to turn into young studs – (Keefer, 2006, pg 544)

Viagra, the most famous and popular impotence and male sexual improvement drug on the market, pursued only by Cialis and then Levitra, may have some unforeseen, and albeit welcome, side impacts. Examiners are saying that not only does Viagra physiologically make the impacts it is meant to, that is to raise blood flow to the penis to assist men get an erection, but it also turns out that it has many positive effects on other medical condition, and may produce a more emotional impacts as well, putting men “in the mood” psychologically for intimacy, affection, and love. In other terms, this may be the drug that is every woman’s dream! Although there are several disagreements about it and Viagra has been plagued with some pessimistic press about side impacts that are unwelcome (what “wonder drug” isn’t), it still continues to be one of the best selling drugs ever, and nearly instantly became a household name after it’s patenting and launch to the public in 1996. The clinical trials found Viagra to be so effective that the FDA approved it only months after submission because there were no troubling questions and no significant side effects. Since then, there have been numerous studies that support its wonder capabilities not only in the original area where it is applied, but in addition finding that this drug and its chemical composition with further studies can be used to assist other drugs in curing a much wider range of other conditions.

I will try to establish a foundation that not only proves that Viagra is the most wonderful drug to treat erectile dysfunction (ED), but also it has enormous potential to treat other conditions as well. I will make the case that a frequent consumption of a low dose of Viagra by middle aged men, can effectively prevent stroke, heart attacks, and can be safely used as an enhancement for optimal physical stamina and mental revitalization. In addition it can also

provide an overall positive manifestation on mental and cognitive health. With all these benefits at a minimal or no risk for men between ages of 40 to 60, low dose Viagra of 25 mg should be made available without a prescription if no preconditions exist.

Middle Aged Men Reality

For most of the men entering the age of 40, the changes that come normally at this age start to bring higher risks with almost every medical condition. In addition to the normal process of aging, with some men come also excessive weight, stress and weak blood flow. Midlife can be a very challenging time for a man.

There are certain health condition risks that are life threatening in men entering midlife. Viagra gives great prognoses in prevention and recovery for heart attack, stroke, and physical stamina.

Atherosclerosis is a condition in which blockages form in blood vessels. Atherosclerosis leads to heart attacks when it involves the blood vessels of the heart and to strokes when it involves the blood vessels leading to the brain. "People who are physically fit are known to be less likely to have atherosclerosis-related events such as heart attacks and strokes." (Lakka 12)

After the age of forty, men with low levels of the male sex hormone testosterone may have a higher risk of death over a four-year period than those with normal levels of the hormone. The hormone testosterone is associated with masculine vigor and potency.

Introduction to the Wonders of Viagra

According to Pfizer's website, 20 million American men have had the Viagra conversation with their doctors. Since it came out on the market, it has become the fastest selling drug in history. Samantha Booth writes in the Daily Record that an estimated 30 million men in 120 countries take Viagra, with nine tablets being prescribed every second. With simple math it calculates that approximately 300 million tablets a year are consumed.

Viagra is a revolutionary drug for erectile dysfunction. It assists men everywhere who are enduring from erectile dysfunction to achieve and be capable to maintain an erection. Erectile dysfunction poses as a grave problem for pairs, and it is most common among elder pairs. As the age of man rises, the risk of getting erectile dysfunction also increases. Luckily, for men everywhere, there is now a wonder drug to assist them with their issues regarding erection, which is the famous drug Viagra. Nevertheless, Viagra is not the usual over the counter drug. It requires a physician or a doctor's prescription in order to be capable to receive or buy the drug. The Viagra points out and dosage also comes with the prescription. Viagra is pointed out for treatment against erectile dysfunction and the dosage may vary depending on the age or weight of the user (Whitehead 2001). Before talking about on the use of Viagra it is compulsory to understand the male anatomy. For lots of people, discussing the penis is tough. This area of the body is considered private and is commonly not talked about openly. Nevertheless, the penis is merely a part of the male anatomy intended to accomplish a task, and it is of essence to understand this part in order to explain how Viagra works.

How Does Viagra Work?

A brief look into Viagra, its components, its working mechanism and impacts will make things clearer to understand. After going through the detailed information on it you can determine why it is the wonderful drug for erectile dysfunction and make the correlation on how it can be used in other areas as well. Erectile dysfunction is caused mostly due to weak blood flow to penile area. Besides less blood flow, there are other factors too that can cause Erectile dysfunction. If a physician finds after diagnosis that less blood flow is the main reason for your erectile dysfunction he will recommend you Viagra as a successful treatment for it. The dosage of Viagra will be fundamentally decided by him based on your nature and state of ED.

Most Erectile dysfunction cases are due to interrupted blood flow to corpora cavernosa chambers in the penis. Clogged arteries or veins lead to erectile dysfunction. Very few people suffer erectile dysfunction due to other causes like illness or accidents. Those who endure from erectile dysfunction mostly due to insufficient blood flow can take Viagra as the magical pill for its healing. One dosage of Viagra is needed before having sex and it

recommended that it is taken half an hour before. Viagra includes Sildenafil Citrate which excites the enzymes phosphodiesterase in the body. The enzymes in turn relax the blood vessels in penis. When the person is gradually sexually excited, blood flows in greater volume through the veins to the corpora cavernosa causing erection. Skowronski (2001) explains that the erection by Viagra is not a forced erection and without excitation the penis will not erect. As the male gets excited there will be natural blood flow to the penile area causing estimated erection.

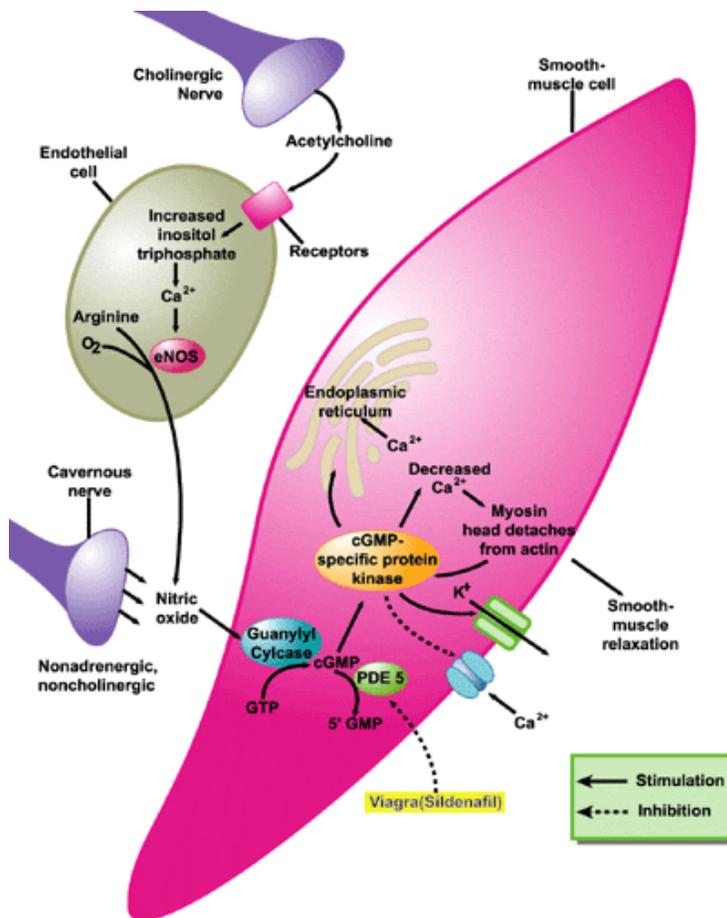


Image Source: Interactive Concepts in Biochemistry. 2002.

The achievement rate of Viagra is really high evaluated to other kinds of medications. “People prefer Viagra because of its success rate in creating hard erection” (Whitehead 2001). It has been the most effective medication all over the world to treat erectile dysfunction caused due to age, excessive weight, stress and weak blood flow.

Viagra’s Great Potential

The primary reason why men take Viagra is erectile dysfunction. By definition, Viagra is a pill used by men to treat erectile dysfunction, or ED. Even, within ED there are varieties of reasons for its use. As men age, with most of men the ability to engage in a sexual activity is expected to decrease, ultimately at some point this function diminishes and possibly disappears. When older men take Viagra, they gain the ability to have an arousal and engage in sex.

If we look back into the 1990s, components that are used today to make Viagra were being researched to cure a completely different condition. The doctors had been running a small clinical trial testing a new drug to treat angina. The report that came out from these trials looked unpromising for the future of the drug. Other trials had shown that it did not have much impact on the disease, and without a doubt it was less effective than existing treatments. When Micheal Allan who at the time was a clinical project manager at Pfizer received the report it mentioned some side effects among the healthy volunteers in the trial. These included indigestion, back pain and, the doctor added, erections. Who would have thought that that last side effect mentioned in the previous sentence was the first hint of a revolution to come.

Later after much focused research, it became obvious that the future of this drug would not be for angina, but for male impotence. However, today it is also finding a host of new uses. The drug that nearly did not make it, and could have been easily scraped, is being used and investigated for the treatment of more than a dozen diseases and health problems. The only other comparable medication is Aspirin, but I believe that Viagra will surpass it by its wide possibilities of usage. Some of the known conditions being evaluated for treatment with Viagra include jet lag, heart failure, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, pain, premature birth, memory loss, and much more.

The Expansive Application of Viagra

Viagra is making the way to being the universal remedy, or as I call it the “Swiss knife” of medicine. Each time there is a research completed on Viagra’s effect in a certain health condition, a new insight on the treatment is imminent.

The most important characteristic about Viagra is its ability to widen arteries enough to lower blood pressure. This is the reason why men who are already taking nitrates are not supposed to use Viagra. Although this is part of the side effect of Viagra, in many other aspects it may be helpful, and scientists are studying whether Viagra might help treat a variety of nonsexual problems.

The following are benefits of Viagra other than what it is primarily used for, and indicates where middle aged men and possible other demographics could benefit from its usage.

Stroke and Neuroprotection

A research article in the journal of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS 2008) says that “problems can arise when people have stents permanently implanted in their arteries to maintain blood flow. Their platelets sometimes connect to the stent and if enough platelets accumulate to form a blockage, this may cause a sudden, massive heart attack or stroke.” Lindsay Wilson, a PhD student in Pathology and molecular medicine and author of the study, says that drugs like Viagra inhibit PDE5, but it has not been possible so far to isolate the small “pool” of activity within the cell where it occurs.

In a recent study published in The Indian Times (2008), the researchers have revealed that within each cell, there are two different pools of the PDE5 enzyme, but that only one of them regulates platelet activation. The article further indicated that “understanding how the cell works should allow us to affect the activity of enzymes in one neighborhood and leave alone their ‘identical twins’ in a different neighborhood in that cell.” The suggestion is to use a PDE5 inhibitor such as Viagra selectively to inhibit platelet function, which pinpoints to the desired location for the placement of such enzymes.

To further continue the support and the significance of liaison between Viagra and stroke, I will point to the analysis of Dr. Silva from Henry Ford Hospital published on the Physician Business Week (2005), who treated the first stroke patient specifically with Viagra. Henry Ford Hospital has conducted a study using Viagra to determine if it can help patients recover from a stroke. The study, which was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, aims to help individuals regain or improve motor and speech skills as well as cognitive thinking.

"We realized that we need to look at what we can do to help people who have had a stroke get their lives back," says Brian Silver, M.D., principal investigator and a neurologist at Henry Ford Hospital. The article in the Physician Business Week continues to explain that this Hospital has used Viagra for two Michigan patients for neurological recovery, both under a compassionate use basis. One patient, Rene Jarinski, 43, has been treated with Viagra since suffering a stroke in July 2003. Transferred to Henry Ford from another hospital, she was diagnosed with locked in syndrome, a very uncommon condition, in which she could only move her eyes up down. She was the first patient in the United States who has been treated with Viagra specifically for stroke recovery. After being given doses of 50 and 100 milligrams early on, she now takes 150 milligrams daily.

Dr. Silver (Henry Ford Hospital) explains how the patient is now able to smile, eat, move all four limbs and stand up with assistance. In the field of medicine this is very unusual for individuals after strokes that typically see a deceleration in recovery. Individuals with locked in syndrome rarely walk or talk again. Rene is making a recovery that doesn't follow the normal “recovery curve.” Utmost choices to this day would have been physical therapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy, however this hospital has been conducting test on animal labs to prove great results between Ischemic stroke and Viagra.

According to the medical journal Stroke (2002), Sildenafil or as it is widely known as Viagra, increases brain levels of chemical in the brain that invokes stroke recovery, and reduces neurological deficits when given to rats 2 or 24 hours after stroke. This suggests that Viagra may

have a role in promoting recovery from stroke. Also, according to the Belfast Telegraph, doctors at the Detroit Neuroscience Institute believe that if given within three days of a stroke, Viagra could help both men and women regain and improve movement, speech and thinking via its effect, which is thought to create new cells in the brain. "What we found is that we can use Viagra to create new brain cells," said Dr Michael Chopp, scientific director of the Neuroscience Institute at the hospital. If Viagra provides significant neurological functional benefits, there is whole spectrum of further possible research in this area.

Heart Failure

Two key results, the oxygen intake and the ability to widen arteries, indicate that Viagra has what it takes to boost the performance of a human's heart. If used correctly by middle aged men, this can be a life saving component. Dr. Nagendran from University of Alberta, explains how "Sometimes the right ventricle can fail rapidly and even result in death, like in lung transplant surgery, for example. In such a case, Viagra may increase the right ventricle's performance and save the patient." (Smith 2007)

Research and the common sense conclusions show that Viagra has the potential to improve heart function and potentially save the lives of people with specific heart issues. The same is supported by Johns Hopkins and other research reports trying to establish direct evidence that sildenafil intensifies the effects of a heart protective protein. A press release at John Hopkins Hospital (2009) reveals that researches at John Hopkins say that "sildenafil's effects on a single protein, RGS2, newly identified in the latest study as an essential link in the chain reactions that initially protect the body's main blood-pumping organ from spiraling into heart failure." The research conducted at John Hopkins is very recent, and there are lab results, that provide the correlation.

Journal of Clinical Investigations (2009) explains how "experimenting in mice, the team of heart experts first established that after a week of induced high blood pressure, the hearts of animals engineered to lack RGS2, or regulator of G-protein signaling 2, quickly expanded in weight by 90 percent. Almost half the mice died of heart failure. In mice with RGS2, by contrast, the dangerous muscle expansion, known as hypertrophy, was delayed, growing only 30 percent, and no mice died."

Referring to Viagra, Dr. Bocchi in the Journal of the American Heart Association (2002) wrote that "the popular medication may even make patients more likely to take their heart failure drugs". In a study that he had conducted, Sildenafil did not show any harmful effects and improved exercise performance during treadmill exercise tests in 23 men with CHF (average age 50) and a history of ED. When we look at the heart problems we should look at them from both the perspective of a medically damaged heart, but also a heart that was not exposed to a healthy lifestyle. Heart related problems are not only caused by a pre-condition, but also to a lack of healthy living, including proper exercise. In the study conducted by Dr. Bocchi, those treated with sildenafil had significantly lower blood pressure and heart rate and improvement in measures of oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide production compared with those on placebo. Also notable is that the total exercise time also increased significantly.

The August 2007 issue of Harvard Men's Health Watch, also suggests that Viagra might help patients with congestive heart failure or diastolic dysfunction. Even though the biggest "fear" against using Viagra was the possibility of heart failure, the outcome is shifting to the

contrary and showing that a controlled dose of Viagra has the ability to have a positive influence on the person's heart.

Stamina and Performance

Researchers writing in the Journal of Applied Physiology (2006) have reported on some interesting trials conducted at simulated high altitude with athletes who received the erectile dysfunction drug Viagra. It seems that Viagra improved the cardiovascular and exercise performance trials of the cyclists by up to 45 out of 100.

According to the Associated Press (2008) article athletes looking for a performance boost are increasingly turning to a little blue pill more usually taken for its off the field benefits. The World Anti-Doping Agency is currently studying Viagra's effects in athletes, but hasn't yet banned it. Many experts are claiming that it offers athletes an edge, and that is all you need to be better in sports. This might not just apply to sports, but also to everyday activities and the stamina needed to get through today's hectic schedules.

Further inclination to allow the use of Viagra is the comment of Dr. Andrew McCullough (2008), a sexual health expert at New York University School of Medicine.: "If you have more oxygen going to your muscles, that's more energy and that makes you a better athlete." He also states that "even if it only gives you a 10 percent increase, in peak athletes, that is enough to win."

If looking at this topic from a sporting perspective, there might be issues about the misuse of Viagra in comparison as a doping substance. My analysis is strictly based on a targeted audience of men over forty years of age, and has nothing to do with sport regulations. In any case, there is no doubt that health is directly linked to exercise and healthy lifestyle. If a small dose of Viagra will help men after the age of 40 to exercise and strengthen their body, without any negative effects that other stimulation substances have, there is no reason to neglect this extraordinary benefit. It is as simple as the fact that in a healthy body there should be a healthy heart and a healthy mind.

Mental Health and Cognitive Balance

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology, proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper, A Theory of Human Motivation. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, there are five levels of needs is predetermined in order of importance, where the biological and physiological needs are at the first level. For the most part, physiological needs are obvious - they are the literal requirements for human survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body simply cannot continue to function. Biological and Physiological needs are: air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sleep, and sex. According to this undeniable theory, if a human is stripped out of sex, they are put out of complete balance. Without the fulfillment of the physiological needs, there is no cognitive development, and the mental health is put at risk.

If there is a disease that places the human being at risk, it would be a disease that would hit the first level of the pyramid first. It is a wonderful thing when scientists find a cure to any disease. Today, you can find a variety of over the counter medicine, ranging from tablets that alleviate headaches to other medication that cure infections, while solving many biological problems. There are free flu vaccines and countless variations of flu medicine widely available. If anyone had thought that so many people would munch through pills for erectile dysfunction, would have been considered insane a decade ago. The reality is that not only that Viagra has become one of the most popular pills in the world; and there are many companies that have successfully managed to come with their own version of Viagra. It seems that in parallel with the need for food and shelter, better sex is right there.

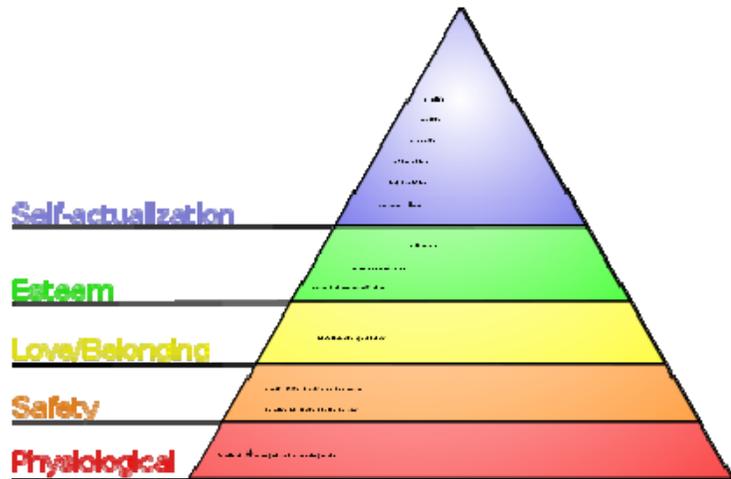


Image source: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs from Psychology (1987)

This effect seems to be bidirectional when psychological causes are in question. Sexual problems can lead to work-related stress and anxiety, marital or relationship problems, depression, feelings of guilt, and vice versa. It is very distracting if a body and the mind are not in sync. Learning and cognitive behavior will be in a disabled mode, when the basic physical needs remain unsatisfied.

On the other side the mental health also has a correlation to how much of a man a man feels to be. Viagra has now entered the discourse on masculinity. The social construction of masculinity is now incorporating this public discourse into the cultural definitions of how men should perform sexually as aging men. Masculinity as a performance of expectations is reinforcing the dominant metaphor of masculinity, man as machine (Friedman 2001).

The physical and mental link has been studied even prior to 1983, when urologist had been waging an unsuccessful struggle with psychiatry for control of the field of male sexual functioning. Freud's ideas of psychogenic causes of male sexual problems had dominated up until a meeting of the American Urologist Association in Las Vegas when medical technology caught up. Dr. Giles Brindley, a British urologist, presented a paper on a new non-surgical method of "treating" impotence (Friedman 2001). On the stage, he demonstrated his new findings by injecting his own penis as part of the presentation and paraded his pharmaceutically induced erection down the aisle for the urologists to see for themselves. That stroll down the aisle "gave birth to the newest idea of the penis, an organ stripped of its psychic significance and mystery and transformed into a tiny network of blood vessels, neurotransmitters, and smooth-muscle tissue knowable only to a credentialed scientist ... In this singular moment, human sexuality, the healing profession, and man's relationship with his penis underwent a huge transformation" (Friedman 2001). It was now within the purview of the medical expert to set the standards of size and performance against which all penises would be measured (Friedman 2001). Not only a medical standard but inherent in the standard is the cultural expectation for men's penises to "perform like power tools with only one switch-on and off" (Bordo 1998).

Viagra goes beyond prosthesis in that Viagra is not an add-on to the body. Yet it is more than a mere drug. Viagra changes penile functioning and in the end sexual functioning. The machine is improved from the inside, not merely lubricated as one might improve an engine on the inside. On the inside something happens to the machine to make it perform better than it had before. There is also a psychological factor that many men after taking Viagra for a while, even after stopping, their gained confidence kept them going even without the need for medication.

And there is no hesitation much of this proliferation has been to the good of men and women, as Dr Graham Jackson, a consultant cardiologist in London and a specialist on sexual issues, described (Vaughan 1998). More than twenty per cent of breakdowns of affairs are caused because a man has erectile issues. It can cause agony for a man when he cannot play as he feels he should. A lot of spouses are type and supportive. A few are cruel. And when you have huge great men crying like babies in your clinic, you get pretty desperate for something that will put their issues to right as soon as possible. Dr. Jackson specifically mentions that “Viagra has done that in a great various cases that have come to my clinic, I am glad to say.” (Hill 2008)

Even More Positive Results

Memory

A number of studies suggest that taking Viagra can boost memory and learning skills. It is not clear and definite yet, but one theory is that it generates increased blood flow and improved glucose processing in the brain. Another theory is that levels of cGMP, which Viagra raises, have to be kept high for peak learning ability. Production of cGMP decreases with age and may contribute to age-related memory decline. According to Auburn University researchers "Viagra offers a new strategy for memory improvement and a novel therapy for Alzheimer's disease in the future."

A new perspective that comes to my mind is living independently as a senior citizen and being able to remember my family and friends. Nonetheless, I am aware in what competitive society we are living and it is not a bad idea to be able to memorize and do well as a student in SAT test or state license test as a future healthcare practitioner.

Jet Lag

Viagra may speed up the recovery from jet lag, according to research at the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes in Buenos Aires. Patricia Agostino of Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1 of 10 researchers for this year's Nobel Prize discovered that a hamster on Viagra recovers faster from jet lag than those which aren't taking the drug. According to Nathan Seppa's writing in the Science News journal "Patricia and her team found that hamsters given Viagra required 50% less time to recover from a 6 hour time zone change." The brain's master clock controls the sleep-wake cycle by releasing hormones and neurotransmitters that regulate a wide range of functions. Viagra boosts its effects by stopping it from being broken down by another enzyme, which causes the effect. Off course they did not fly hamsters on first class transatlantic flights; they simply turned the lights off and on at various times. This discovery could provide a major impact for flyers and their adaptation to jet lag. While other treatments exist for jet lag, in the ABC

News Medical Unit article (2007) about the Jet Lag's Impact, Dr. Golombek said that his research presents a novel approach to the problem using what is "generally a safe drug."

Raynaud's Phenomenon Treatment

Raynaud's phenomenon is a disease in which blood vessels contract to delay the blood circulation. In severe cases Raynaud's phenomenon can lead to gangrene. This condition is closely linked to the blood circulation in a particular part of the body. By managing the flow to other extremities, rather the penis, this methodology could be promising in many areas. Dr. Jack Lichtenstein, who carried out his study in Maryland claims that he has successfully treated 10 patients with Raynaud's phenomenon, using Viagra. He further elaborates that "In all patients, the results ranged from an excellent response to complete relief of symptoms." This truly shows that Viagra works here by increasing blood flow and returning circulation to the affected areas (Dobson 2007).

Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis is the most common disabling disease of the central nervous system in young adults. Multiple sclerosis is thought to be caused when the immune system attacks the sheaths that protect our nerves. The damage caused disrupts the way that messages are carried to and from the brain, interfering with a wide range of body functions. Auburn University is conducting research which suggests that Viagra may protect against some degeneration. A number of studies have suggested that taking Viagra can boost memory and learning skills. There is no clear scientific explanation, but the results pinpoint to successful results. One theory is that it triggers increased blood flow and improved glucose processing in the brain. Other theories depict that levels of a brain chemical which Viagra increases, have to be kept high for peak learning ability. If further research manages to show significant scientific proof, this could lead to a numerous potential treatments, possibly including Alzheimer's disease as well.

Diabetes, Premature Birth, and Pain

"Research on 40 men at the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social in Mexico showed that Viagra lowered levels of compounds associated with heart disease in patients with type-2 diabetes." (Lorentz 2007)

Doctors have been using Viagra in a trial with pregnant women as a therapy for intrauterine growth restriction, in which the fetus is smaller than expected for the number of weeks of the pregnancy. The condition is estimated to affect around 5 per cent of births. It's thought that the drug increases blood supply to the womb and placenta so that more nutrients and oxygen get through to the fetus, which can then carry on growing in the womb and is not born as prematurely as it might otherwise have been. Viagra works in this case by allowing blood vessels to expand and increases blood flow to the baby. In Israel, a trial is underway where pregnant women will be given 25mg of Viagra. If doing so allows the babies to spend just a few more days in the womb, this could make a big difference to the child's long-term health.

"Viagra has been shown to have immense potential for the treatment of pain in animals and humans," said pharmacologists at Auburn University. I am not sure how this works, however in the February 2007 issue of the American Academy of Pain Medicine, Alexander Krakovsky writes how "95 patients (70%) reported decrease numerical pain score (NPS) from 20 to 40% just with an addition of Viagra or Cialis to they treatment plan." Even though not as a primary drug, we can see that Viagra can stimulate specific effects and in conjunction with other medicine, it can increase the effect of the desired results.

Certainly, Viagra can even make some unlawful drugs safer cocaine is a very hazardous drug because it causes coronary arteries to close and can at times give you a heart disease. Viagra has the opposite impact and so can help the cocaine user. Such an impact is generally accidental, nevertheless. Most clubbers take cocaine-Viagra mixes known as coconut pokes to get high while still being capable to play sexually (Jones 2008). Protection against heart attacks is not the prime concern here, unnecessary to say.

This all shows that Viagra and similar medicine can have a valid potential to become the "Swiss-knife" of medicine, with its wide range of medical conditions that it could potentially address. With all the great things that it has provided so far, I believe that its limitless possibilities have not yet been fully exploited.



Image source: FreakingNews.com

Not Everyone Agrees with Me

Heart risk

Many claim that Viagra is not such a miracle drug with hidden unsafe truth behind it. For example, Diego Padro had chronic diabetes, a condition that led to impotence. When he heard that Viagra was a safe and effective treatment, he asked his doctor if he could try it. But the day after taking Viagra, he felt ill. And three days later, he had a heart attack. "He gave me no warnings of any kind," Padro said. Many have claimed that Viagra was linked to heart problems. There are statistics that show that many people have died after taking Viagra.

Sexual (un) control and Dependency

There is a different angle of this drug where instead of a success story Viagra has shattered the lives of people that used it. Some impotent men who turned to Viagra are now eliminating the use of the drug after it caused more problems than it solved research has revealed. Viagra was an immediate fix in bedroom issues, for many it has revealed other relationship problems. Some have reported that it has increased their partner's sexual expectations beyond the powers of their own libido while others have found said they have discovered they are simply no longer attracted to their spouses. Men have also reported that the

rediscovered ability to gain an erection has merely exposed the emotional flaws in their relationship that were the cause of their impotence in the first place.

On the other side, there have been other side effects that are not merely physically of a medical nature. Surely, the drug has brought joy to many affairs. Nevertheless, it has also had in various cases a destructive effect. Now men have a drug to assist them with the sexual ignition and the process, however, they have also proved a worrying trend to get up and leave for younger women. In the procedure, Viagra has become the third party in various wedding splits (Finn 2005). The issue is that Viagra widens the age period in which men can commit adultery and that is the catalyst for most relation breakdowns.

Moral and Ethics

Every religion deals with moral values. In Catholicism lust is one of the seven deadly sins. Some do claim that there is a correlation between Viagra and surfeit of sex that leads to committing sins. If the controversial pill encourages infidelity and promiscuity, there is cause for worry. Several effects stem from illegitimate relationships encouraged by Viagra. Unwanted pregnancies and abortions may result, adding more reason for the criticism of the medication.

Vision

The first issue comes because Viagra occurs to have a spillover impact. It blocks PDE5, but it also has an impact on PDE6. It turns out that PDE6 is used in the cone cells in the retina, so Viagra can have an effect on color vision. Lots of people who take Viagra notice a change in the way they perceive green and blue colors, or they see the world with a bluish tinge for many hours. For this reason, pilots can't take Viagra within twelve hours of a flight, and why would they take a full dose of Viagra before flying anyway?

Other issues with Viagra can be as small as headaches (the drug as a side effect in some men, opens up arteries in the brain's lining and causes excess pressure) or as big as heart disease. The possibility of heart attacks is one reason why Viagra is a recommendation drug rather than an over the counter drug like aspirin. A physician needs to realize your medical history and ensure that Viagra will not present the risk of a heart attack. Occasional sufferers who take Viagra get painful, long lasting erections and have to see a physician to resolve the issue. Lastly, there is some concern that some men, particularly younger men who take Viagra and who do not really need it for physical reasons, may end up with a dependency on the drug. That is, they may become not capable to sustain an erection without taking Viagra.

Affirmation of Truth and Morals

The vast majority of those who have health problems are older men with underlying diabetes, heart disease, or other medical conditions. If there are medical conditions then it is up to the doctors to advise their patients. When we are looking into high dosage, it's with the doctors who are prescribing it. Users have to be educated that a small dosage is safe and it should not be used differently. Even drinking too much water can be harmful. There are many ways how to

prevent men abuse the medication. Those men with precondition should consult with their doctors, and they would for any other medication usage.

As far as the reports that show cases of patients dying after taking Viagra, there is very little said about other conditions about these individuals. What if we conclude that it is dangerous to drink water, since many people die in the same day when they drank? We must note that the old individuals might have had many other conditions that could cause death or other complications. One of them is that Viagra gave them strength to perform something they could not otherwise do, and their hearts could not take it, and not that the pills chemical component killed them.



Amazing facts based on number of years of research by great scientists, has proven Viagra’s very close connection with the wellbeing of brain as preventive Viagra and curable to generous extent compared to any other method medicine has to offer to stroke patients. There are far fewer functional deficits. Look at the benefits. Not even mentioning the benefits in ED, in other areas animals treated with Viagra days after stroke had a

significant reduction in neurological deficit and a significant induction of new brain cells. Studies show (Journal of the American Medical Association 2002) that one can be treated with Viagra, erythropoietin, or statins days after stroke and there is a significant reduction in neurological deficit and a significant induction of new brain cells. Mayo clinic research (JAMA 2002) also notes that “using ultrasound images of the heart during exercise, Mayo Clinic researchers have shown for the first time that sildenafil citrate (Viagra) does not adversely affect blood flow to the heart in men with stable coronary artery disease who are not taking nitrates.”

The most important factor of all is that low doses of Viagra have proved to be harmless, but very helpful in many areas that make lives better for men over 40. Not only the medication alone, but its effect in aiding other necessities such as exercise and oxygen and blood flow. These together will lead to a better lifestyle for middle age men.

The clinical side effects of Viagra are not deadly to the person’s health and they gradually fade away as one becomes used to the medication. Very few percentages of people have endured blur vision or weak vision after taking Viagra. Otherwise the drug has been broadly accepted as the safest and most successful drug for gradually. Even the FDA has passed this as the first oral medicine for erectile dysfunction. (Metzl 5)

As far as the relationship and the social issues, on the contrary, Viagra has saved as many, if not more, matrimonies than it destroys. If a partner’s sex life is bad, then that can give increase to all sorts of other issues. By enhancing a couple’s intimate relation, Viagra strengthens the marital bond. As far as the sexual control, it is not too difficult to realize that achieving a great erection does not solve “all” relationship problems. Viagra is not a solution for couples who have other issues in their relationship.

This point was backed by David Ralph, a consultant at the Institute of Urology, University College London. Viagra has changed the lives not only of millions of sufferers with erectile dysfunction but the lives of their spouses as well. Additionally, media coverage means

that after generations of taboo, of declining to discuss sexual failure, erectile dysfunction has become a subject that can be talked about openly, a point stressed by the writer Erica Jong. Impotence was the great secret (Morse 26).

Pursuit of Happiness

Happiness is a part of virtue and virtue is a form of wisdom. “A person lacking a virtue also lacks the virtue of justice, love, and so forth” (Devettre 64). Desire and happiness are human qualities, attributes to these virtues are sex and health, and in both, Viagra time and again has been a benefit. Resulting from older mythologies, apple, once a “forbidden fruit”, today a blessed fruit, resembles Viagra in the context where an embarrassing once topic tomorrow cunning of our overall health.

Appreciation of the drug knows no cultural and religious boundaries. “Viagra ultimately is pursuit of happiness” which an essential human chase therefore establishing moral foundation for an individual to be happy within means. Why not pursue health and happiness? Just like D.H. Lawrence (333) says:

“...but hysteria is dangerous: and she was a nurse, it was her duty to pull him out. Any attempt to rouse his manhood and his pride only would make him worse: for his manhood was dead, temporarily if not finally. He only would squirm softer and softer like a worm...”

However, the value of using low doses of Viagra is directly associated with the scientific medical principles of trying to prevent rather cure a disease. There is no reason for a middle aged individual to present themselves to the risk of stroke or a heart attack, if there are means that can help prevent them. The cost of low dose Viagra consumption and proper exercise and diet, are indisputably lower than the treatment of the aftermath when these conditions become apparent. The true value is not just measurable with the cost, but with the quality of life for the proposed demographic.

Are We Ready for Viagra

Yes, we are. It is hard to find a case that someone has directly died from ED. It is not a disease that can cause civilizations to diminish; it can not even kill one person! So, what is all the hype and why did we need a cure so badly? On the contrary there have been cases that people have died after taking the pill. The company that produces Viagra, Pfizer, warns that individuals with certain conditions should not take Viagra. One of those conditions stresses out that people with heart problems should be careful and consult the doctor. However, it happens, people die after taking the Viagra pill, either before or during the sexual intercourse. This leads for me to think that even though ED does not kill, in some cases men are willing to even take the risk of dying just to get their spark back. Back when Viagra was introduced, it was even sold for hundreds of dollars in countries that had not yet have the drug available, or their governments had banned such pills to be available in those countries. Such an example is Saudi Arabia, where men flooded the sea ports with cash in their hands to get a hold of the miracle blue diamond pill, which is the actual shape of the Viagra pill. Were these people going to die if they did not get the medication? No.

Ok this is all great, but why do millions of pills get sold? Is everybody suffering from ED? I hope not. The answer lies in something that most if not all of the male population thrives for, and that is masculinity and performing better in bed, which makes a man more of a man. So what is really Viagra curing? Is it the erectile dysfunction or some kind of male prestige? The answer is both and even more.



The popularity of Viagra came not only from its effective handling of erectile dysfunction, but from dealing with one of the most essential human needs, better and more sex. Better sex, or sex compared to no sex, is proven to help the mental state both in men and women.

The most common problem associated with male menopause is depression which is closely related to impotence and problems with male sexuality. Male depression is a disease with devastating consequences. Jed Diamond in his book *Male Menopause* (1998) mentions that “one of the most common side effects of Prozac and Zoloft is sexual dysfunction. Reported incidence of

impotence can be as high as 30%, making these medications a poor choice for a male in mid-life crisis that is obsessing about inadequate sexual performance.” Considering that the male suicide rate at midlife is three times higher; for men over 65, seven times higher, impotence truly can be dangerous in a sense that creates instability of the mental balance, and might lead to unwanted and dangerous situations. This is nothing new, Victor Vecki, M.D. back in 1912 writes about a young man who, before committing suicide, had written down the words, “I am impotent, consequently I am good for nothing in this life.”

From Research to Policy

Even though this paper focuses on middle age men, Viagra in low doses should be made available to everyone (men and women) over the age of forty. Past research shows that Viagra successfully treats erectile dysfunction with minimal or no side effects. Current research has taken this medical drug and applied it further in preventing or curing other medical conditions as well. Its enhanced effect on improved blood flow and oxygen intake has made it possible to treat a wide range of conditions, as well as prevent potential life threatening unexpected diseases. We have arrived at a point that because of all these benefits, low dose of Viagra of 25 mg (milligrams) should easily become available for men between the ages of 40 and 60.

Conclusion

This magic diamond shaped pill has been a blessing for men with ED. Even the Vatican has blessed the use of the pill (Elsbach 147). Imagine what a life changing event it has been for someone that has given up from having sex, not on daily or weekly basis, but for the remainder of their life, and now they become active again, it simply makes them shout, “yes I can”. Not only that it has been a magic moment for those men that became sexually active again, but also for the wives that cheating has not been an option. Reborn, if I may say.

It was the drug that changed the sexual landscape. Before Viagra, impotence meant shame and often the fall down of all but the most dedicated affairs. The finding of its startling capability to restore men's faded sexual function activated a social revolution as monumental as that caused by the contraceptive pill.

This vanishing of sexual reticence has been specifically beneficial for the general health of the people, and is one of the major advantages of the Viagra revolution. In making men less afraid to discuss their sexual issues, it is becoming easier to make diagnoses of more grave diseases. "The circulation issues that create erectile dysfunction can also be symptoms of vascular blockage and diabetes." (Skowronski 2001)

This social discourse around Viagra and erectile dysfunction is shaping how aging men understand themselves as men and as sexual men. The reality is that with all of the increasing medicalization and medical technology aging and death are still inevitable. Growing older comes with its physical consequences even though longevity has increased for most men in our society. Things do go wrong and there is an accumulation of degeneration that cannot be stopped.

The cultural discourse on aging as expressed in mass media presents "good" aging, where bodies are youthful and usually engaged in some activity or sport (Friedman 2001). These same images are used in the erectile dysfunction ads for Viagra, Levitra and Cialis, where couples are shown vibrant and youthful, who are seemingly able to experience a non-aging sexual life. Significantly, given the cultural expectation of aging well, "individuals are taught that they have a responsibility to attain perfection" (Friedman 2001). Aging men are expected to remain youthful when in fact the reality is that they are not young and are facing the inevitable decline that is central to human existence.

Viagra has provided expectation to a large number of men who would otherwise not maybe have been very visible those who cannot get an erection but otherwise have normal sexual desires. One reason sales of Viagra are so high, observes sex commentator Susie Bright, is that men see it as a wonder drug which will make great sex perhaps the sort of sex they think they should have been having all along. At the very end, it should be obvious that no amount of technology will prevent the inevitable cycle of organic life, however during the normal cycle of life, it is desired that the body and the mind remain healthy, and do not cause one to degrade another.

Closing Statement

We have enough proof that Viagra can provide a great benefit in other areas other than treating erectile dysfunction. We are in a position to make a decision that because of all these benefits, 25 mg of Viagra should easily become available to everyone of age 40 to 60, even without a prescription. We have to look at the arena created today. The lives of middle age men are becoming more hectic every day. The workdays are longer, the amount of stress is creeping up, and yet the bodies and minds are the same. The new reality is that the components in Viagra can help in our every day activities, and consumed in a small dose there is no harm, there are only benefits.

"Plato was a specific, accurate lover who sent me to heaven when we had sex, at least until he turned thirty" (Keefer, 2006, page 32)

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Appendix I

Field Research Interviews

“... The desire rose again, his penis began to stir like a live bird” – D.H. Lawrence (Lady Chatterley’s Lover)

My approach to the field study interviews was to find individuals from the following three categories:

1. Individuals that claim that Viagra has helped them
2. Individuals that have ED and either don’t use Viagra or if they did it did not help
3. Professionals with a Pharmacology that have knowledge about Viagra

The first category was the easiest one. There were individuals that claimed that had mild dysfunction and Viagra helped them overcome both the physical and mental barriers. Also, there were individuals that consumed Viagra for no medical reason, but simply to perform better which in a way shows that they might have had some confidence issues, and were looking to reassure and reestablish this confidence.

Initially, I could not find anyone that Viagra did not help. However, after a while I did get contacted by one person, someone very close to me, who came forward to me after finding out that I was writing about this subject. He confessed to me, and to no one else, that he has tried Viagra but without success. Unfortunately, he falls into that small percentage that has no hope. This person came to me not because that I could help him with his condition (he knew that), but to get emotional support, and at least to have some mental quality life.

Lastly, I was able to schedule an interview with a pharmacology doctor from Montefiore Hospital. She was very knowledgeable of the subject matter and provided answers from a neutral perspective. Even though there was no emotional substance, she provided the information that I wanted to include from a credible source.

How did I incorporate all of this in my research paper?

From the category of people that used successfully the drug, I concluded that they not only got the benefit of having a sexual relationship, but they also managed to balance their every day relationships with their family and/or their partners. They were more confident in communication with everyone else, and erectile dysfunction did not pose a distraction for other activities, such as hobbies or work.

The person that came to me for emotional help, made me realize how much of a toll has this dysfunction caused, both on physical and mental health. He had tried unsuccessfully to cure his condition, and as a way of distracting himself from the problem, he has caused both physical and emotional harm to himself. If there is a cure for his condition, it would likely help him both

in the relationship area (which has started to diminish) and emotional where he is almost diving into deep depression.

Summing up, the pharmacologist was able to give me the medical perspective of the condition, and provide factual information both about the condition and the medical drug. She was also able to confirm that even though there is no widespread use of Viagra for curing other conditions than ED, there is research being conducted that include sildenafil citrate (main component in Viagra) in treating other conditions or used as an assisting drug. Even though there has been some very positive findings and feedback, there are more studies that need to be conducted in order to achieve tangible and definite results.

Interview with Dr. Blaku – Montefiore Hospital

The first interview is conducted at Montefiore Hospital. The interviewer is Dr. Zana Blaku, who has a PhD in pharmacology. There is not much to say about the hospital, it was just like any other major medical institution. However, the pharmacy was a compound that had to be sterile at all times, and the interview was not possible to be conducted in that area. Therefore, I met Dr. Blaku in the cafeteria.

I notified and sent Dr. Blaku my questions in advance, thus the interview did not take long, since she had most of the answers ready. She also added that her answers are pretty much aligned with what other health professionals give as an advice and have written in literacy articles and medical journals.

Q: Often I read about new natural treatments for ED. No prescription is needed and satisfaction is guaranteed. Can you advice if this is something men should try?

A: No, I can not recommend any treatment that has not been properly diagnosed and offered without a prescription. Natural herbs may be highly marketed, but the great majority of them have no documented proof of being effective.

Q: Is there any over the counter medicine that treats impotence or ED?

A: There is no over the counter medications that is effective for the treatment. There are several medicines such as Viagra, Cialis, and Levitra that are available but only with prescriptions.

Q: My father in law is 78 years old. Is Viagra safe for him?

A: First of all before taking Viagra, he must check with the cardiologist to make sure that he has no heart condition. If he is able to stand physical activities involving a moderate level of exercise, such as climbing two flights of stairs, and if he is not taking nitrates, it is probably safe to take Viagra. In elderly individuals doctors recommend that a lower dose for example 25 mg be used initially. The dosage can increase if done cautiously. It is important to check with his doctor and not just buy over the internet or take a pill from a friend or someone else.

Q: If a dose of 100 mg is not effective, should the person double the dose?

A: Not really, it does not work like that. Studies have shown that increasing the dose of Viagra from 100 to 200 mg does not increase its effectiveness and it can only increase the side effects.

Q: I read on the internet about Viagra death cases reported by the FDA. Is Viagra really deadly as some are portraying it?

A: Unfortunately, these reports might have been misunderstood. The fact is that there were more than hundred deaths reported to the FDA in patients in whom Viagra was prescribed. This just represented people that had a prescription for Viagra, but none of these reported deaths were directly related to the use of Viagra alone. Viagra is an extremely well tested and proven safe drug. I can provide you with complete reports about Viagra and death reports that were reported to the FDA.

Q: Does having side effects of Viagra such as headache and nasal congestions mean that there is a risk for other more serious complications such as heart attack?

A: Not really. Heart attack is not a complication of Viagra. It can be triggered by any physical activity, including sexual activity. Experiencing the minor side effects of Viagra does not mean that the person has a higher potential for serious complications.

Q: How many times should a person try Viagra before giving up and moving to a different treatment option?

A: Most doctors recommend at least a trial of 100 mg dose or otherwise the highest tolerated dose on at least four different occasions.

Q: Why doesn't Viagra work in some patients?

A: Viagra is effective in up to 70 percent of patients with ED. The others don't respond to Viagra because they have severe vascular disease or damage on the nerves.

Q: It seems that medications for the treatment of ED take the spontaneity out of sex and lovemaking has to be planned. What can be done to avert this?

A: Viagra's effectiveness for enhancing erections lasts approximately 4 hours, starting an hour after the pill is taken. This 4 hour window leaves enough time to be flexible and removes some of the pressure for immediate performance. Also, if Viagra is taken and there is no sexual activity there is no reason to be upset. No harm is done by wasting the pill. There are other options as well. There are some studies that show that other medication such as Cialis last up to 24 hours, thus providing longer time for spontaneity of sexual activity.

Q: Does Viagra save relationships?

A: If the sexual experience is in question, then it is definitively seen as a positive stimulant. But one thing is important to know, that Viagra will fix the mechanical problem of sex and it can have a positive psychological effect, but it does not fix relationship problems.

Q: Recently we have learned that Viagra has been applied to many new fields in medical healthcare, curing many other conditions that are not only ED related. What do you think about the potential of this drug in these other areas?

A: Primarily Viagra is used as a treatment of pulmonary arterial hypertension. I am aware of many other studies that include sildenafil citrate in treating other conditions or used as an assisting drug. Even though there has been some very positive findings and feedback, there is a lot more research and studies that need to be conducted in order to have more concrete and definite answers.

Interview with Ross – Wall Street Bar

This is a casual interview conducted on a relaxed setting while a live band was singing. The location is in a New York City downtown restaurant bar. The interview was made possible by Ela and Maria, my classmates from Writing Workshop II. This location seemed to me a typical Wall Street location where people go for a drink after work. I changed the name of the interviewed person for privacy reasons.

Three interviews were conducted on July 9th at this location; however I will include only one with Ross.

Q (me): Did you have issues with ED?

A (Ross): NO. I was at the club and someone offered us Viagra, by that time, my friends and I were hanging out with some girls and gave it a try.

Q (me): Do you take Viagra on a regular basis?

A (Ross): No only when I have to, or have been drinking and need to get it up.

Q (me): Do you have any side effects?

A (Ross): Side effects? (hahaha) Amazing side effects

Q (me): Did you overdose on Viagra?

A (Ross): No need to, you're good to go all night and next day.

Q (me): Viagra gives you male enhancement – is it size or stiffness?

A (Ross): Ha-ha-both

Q (me): Have you had an erection that lasted more than four hours? If so, what did you do?

A (Ross): It did last more than that and I kept going. Yeh.

Q (me): Do you get prescription or black-market?

A (Ross): Oh no, no prescription, I get them from someone.

Q (Ross): Surprisingly reverse from its effects, Viagra has taken a toll on some relationships. Has there ever been a conflict from your taking Viagra?

A (Ross): Just encouraging effects. Of course (smiles again).

Q (me): Have you noticed that your dear one “wants” you more, because of Viagra? Would you care?

A (Ross): She loves it; she is in haven- whatever makes her happy.

Q (me): Has it ever become an issue for your significant other to meet your amplified performance?

A (Ross): No we try other things, you see, it becomes very sensitive I get orgasms within few minutes with oral sex and other ways....

Q (me): Do you think Viagra alienates men from their emotional relationships with women?

A (Ross): No didn't even think about it.

Q (me): Overall do you think it has become a part of “selfhood” for indefinite time?

A (Ross): I don't know, not for ever but it is good thing to know it's out there.

Q (me): When going on vacation or trips do you take them with you?

A (Ross): On vacation few times, but not on business trip. I'm a grown up, now how to use it, I don't abuse it.

Me: Thank you Ross. Your answers and your participation is much appreciated!