Sex After Transplant

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Sex After Transplantation

Objectives

• Sexual concerns are common after transplantation
• There are several physical and psychological reasons for these concerns
• Most sexual concerns can be dealt with successfully
Definitions

- Libido
- Impotence (erectile dysfunction)
- Fertility
Effect of Kidney Transplantation and Cyclosporine on Male Sexual Performance

- 50 male, non-diabetics on dialysis who eventually underwent kidney transplant
- 40% had reduced libido before transplant, improved to 30% post-transplant
- 60% had ED before transplant, improved to 45% post-transplant
Demographics
- 71 of 115 male heart transplant patient responded to a survey (62%)
- Age averaged 48 (range 24-64)
- 74% living with their spouse

Results
- Pre-transplant libido was strong and remained unchanged after heart transplant
- Transplant recipients reported their partner’s libido to be strong and even stronger after transplant
- Erectile rigidity and orgasmic ability were impaired before and declined further after the transplant procedure
- Respondents perceived this gap between libido and sexual ability to be a problem, interest in evaluation and treatment was high
Demographics
- 54 men and 36 women after kidney transplant responded to a survey

Results
- Sexual desire increased significantly compared to reports of levels 6 months pre-transplant
- Men had improved erectile function and ability to reach non-coital orgasms
- About ¼ of patients still had sexual difficulties
- The frequency of sexual activity and overall sexual satisfaction did not improve significantly
Results of the Hershey Transplant Support Group Sexual Concern Survey (1993)

- Received 27 questions
  - 6 Erectile dysfunction
  - 3 Loss of libido
  - 2 Effect on transplanted organ
  - 3 Frequency of sexual encounters
  - 1 Duration of sexual experiences
  - 1 Self-image concern
  - 4 Concerns about spouse
  - 2 Positions for sex
  - 1 Concern about CMV
Concerns relating to partner
“How do you put the romance back into your sex life after transplant?”

- Re-acquainting yourself with your partner
- Openly discuss your feelings and concerns
- Discuss feelings about self-image
- Be patient
Loss of Libido

“I have no desire, how do I get back in the swing?”

- Discuss with your physician to determine whether medications may be contributing
- Primary disease
- Recovering from illness
- Endocrine problems
- Depression
Frequency of Sex

“How often can I have sex?”

• How often can you have sex?
Sexual Positions

“What is the best position for sex when having trouble breathing?”

• Physical discomfort or strenuous effort can impair sexual performance

• Position should be comfortable, pace should also be comfortable
Oral Sex

“What about oral sex?”

- Female genitalia
  - Mucous membranes
  - Numerous bacterial colonizers
  - Some fungi colonizers (yeast)
- Penis
  - Generally inhabited by skin bacteria
  - Body fluids should be sterile
Effect on the transplanted organ

“Can anything bad happen to the organ transplanted?”

• Heart – it can take it
• Kidney – protected by a layer of muscle
Concern about CMV

“Is CMV a concern?”

- Requires close and prolonged contact for transmission
- Probably can be transmitted sexually
- Biggest concern is when immunosuppression is most intense
Birth Control

- Medical condition and need for procedures may preclude pregnancy
- Medications used are a concern with pregnancy – talk with your doctor
Erectile dysfunction

“It doesn’t stand at attention anymore. HELP!”

• Causes
  – Endocrine (testosterone)
  – Pelvic surgery, nerve injuries
  – Vascular disease or vascular surgery
  – Diabetes and other systemic diseases
  – Medications
  – Psychological
Treatment Options for Transplant Recipients with Erectile Dysfunction

- Psychotherapy/counseling
- Stop alcohol or tobacco use
- Vacuum erection devices
- Intracavernous injections
- Urethral suppositories
- Vascular procedures
- Penile prostheses
Fiona made a mental note to send the makers of Viagra a thankyou card.
DOC? CAN YOU WRITE ME A PRESCRIPTION FOR SOME OF THAT VIAGRA?
Use of PDE5 Inhibitors

- Clearly contraindicated
  - Concurrent use of nitrates
- Cardiovascular effects may be potentially hazardous
  - Patients with active coronary artery disease
  - Patients with heart failure and low blood flow or borderline low volume status
  - Patients on a complicated, multidrug, antihypertensive program
  - Patients taking drugs that interact with PDE5 inhibitors
Sildenafil (Viagra®)

- 50 mg once daily 1 hour (range: 30 minutes to 4 hours) before sexual activity; dosing range: 25-100 mg once daily
  - Time to peak – 1 hour
  - Half-life – 4 hours
Incidence of Erectile Dysfunction and Efficacy of Sildenafil in the Cardiac Transplant Patient

Wren FJ, Jarowenko MV, Burg J, Boehmer J. Journal Heart Lung Trans; Feb 2001, p 246
Vardenafilil (Levitra®)

- 10 mg 60 minutes prior to sexual activity; dosing range: 5-20 mg; to be given as one single dose and not given more than once daily.
  - Time to peak – 0.5 – 2 hours
  - Half-life – 4-5 hours
Tadalafil (Cialis®)

• 10 mg at least 30 minutes prior to anticipated sexual activity (dosing range: 5-20 mg); to be given as one single dose and not given more than once daily.
  – Time to peak – 2 hours
  – Half-life – 17.5 hours - Erectile function may be improved for up to 36 hours following a single dose
Warnings

- Color discrimination: May cause dose-related impairment of color discrimination.
- Hearing loss: Sudden decrease or loss of hearing has been reported rarely; hearing changes may be accompanied by tinnitus and dizziness. A direct relationship between therapy and hearing loss has not been determined.
- Hypotension: Decreases in blood pressure may occur due to vasodilator effects. Concurrent use with alpha-adrenergic antagonist therapy or substantial alcohol consumption may cause symptomatic hypotension.
- Vision loss: Vision loss may occur rarely and be a sign of nonarteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION).
- Priapism
Warnings

- **Priapism**: Painful erection >6 hours in duration; rare. Educate patient to seek medical assistance for erection lasting >4 hours.

**Priapus**: In Greek mythology, Priapus (Ancient Greek: Πρίαπος) was a minor rustic fertility god, protector of livestock, fruit plants, gardens and male genitalia.
Questions
“Remember to stop & smell the flowers! Don’t rush through life—you might miss it. Savor it. Every precious moment. Be a participant, not an observer.”