

DHEA supplementation associated with improved sexual function in women



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A report published October 11, 2018 in the journal *Endocrine* revealed improvements in sexual function among older premenopausal women who supplemented with the hormone dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA).

In their introduction to the article, authors Vitaly A. Kushnir of the Center for Human Reproduction in New York and colleagues describe their use of DHEA in the treatment of infertile women who had low levels of androgen hormones. "In the process of treating thousands of so-affected infertile women, we noticed that many spontaneously reported improvements in libido, sexual desire and, sometimes, even pain status, leading to the paradoxical situation of women refusing to discontinue DHEA supplementation once they conceived," they remarked. "When we, in a review of the literature, were unable to find a study that investigated the effectiveness of DHEA on female sexuality in older premenopausal women, this study was developed."

The study included 50 infertile premenopausal women whose age averaged 41 years. The participants supplemented with oral DHEA for a minimum of six weeks prior to starting any other fertility treatments. Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) questionnaires were completed, and serum hormone levels were analyzed at the beginning of the study and four to eight weeks after initiating treatment with DHEA.

Serum androgen hormone levels, including DHEA and testosterone, were shown to increase following DHEA supplementation. In comparison with pretreatment scores, FSFI index scores improved by 7%, including a 17% increase in desire, a 12% increase in arousal, and an 8% increase

in lubrication. However, among women whose scores were among the lowest 25% of the group, total FSFI scores increased by 34%, which included a 40% increase in desire, a 46% increase in arousal, and a 33% increase in lubrication. Women in this group also experienced a 54% increase in orgasm, greater satisfaction, and less pain in comparison with pretreatment values.

While women whose FSFI scores were indicative of sexual dysfunction benefitted the most from DHEA, the fact that the study population as a whole experienced mild improvement suggests to the researchers that DHEA supplementation could positively impact the sexual well-being of women in this age group.

NEW FEATURE

Life Extension Tips:

Diminished sexual response is a common complaint as people get older. While hormones like DHEA can sometimes help, what else can one do?

Work it out

Exercise can increase blood flow, including blood flow to the genital area. It also boosts mood, which is of critical importance in sexual response. Furthermore, the physical results obtained from a regular exercise regimen can improve self-image and confidence. Sex itself can also be a great workout!

D is for Desire

Could vitamin D be the reason why sunlight makes people feel sexy? A recently published study found improvement in female mood as well as sexual desire, orgasm, and satisfaction after supplementation with vitamin D.¹

1. *Endokrynol Pol.* 2018;69(2):168-174.

Make time

Hectic schedules can leave couples with little time. Perceived lack of time can also lead to resentment. It's important to organize priorities and make sure that our