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Male Sexual Dysfunction in the New Millennium

Key Words

Erectile dysfunction
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Apomorphine
Gene therapy

Sexual dysfunction has been a problem for human beings since ancient times. It probably could not even be treated because sex was a taboo in conservative, traditional societies. After Freud, sexual dysfunction was mainly viewed as being psychological in origin, and management was by psychoanalysis. However, the pioneering work of Masters and Johnson led to major advances in the knowledge of the human sexual response and to treatment of psychosexual disorders by sex therapy.¹ The recognition that organic factors are important in the pathogenesis of sexual dysfunction occurred in the 1970s and 1980s; a tremendous increase in the understanding of penile anatomy,² physiology, and especially hemodynamics³ fostered new ways of treating male erectile dysfunction, both pharmacologically and surgically.⁴⁻⁶ Through the discovery of intracavernous vasoactive agents, mainly papaverine and prostaglandin E₁, immediate penile erection could revolutionary be induced with a fine-needle, intracavernosal injection.⁷ The past 2 decades have seen revolutionary changes in how male erectile dysfunction is dealt with from surgical implantation of penile

prostheses to intracavernous injections.⁸ Moreover, the current effective oral medication, sildenafil citrate (ViagraTM),⁹ caused another dramatic transition in patient management from injection therapy to widespread use of oral medication. Many developing oral agents may become the new trend for the future treatment of male erectile dysfunction. In another aspect, for correction of defects in the corporal cavernosal smooth muscle (CCSM), gene therapy may become a viable and relatively non-invasive therapeutic option.¹⁰ What is the place of traditional definite therapies in the new millennium? I would like to briefly discuss the above topics.

New Oral Agents for Erectile Dysfunction

The successful launching of sildenafil in 1996 seemed to herald a new era for the management of male erectile dysfunction. This effective oral agent took its place as the first-line choice for both diagnosis and treatment of impotent patients. It has been prescribed to more than 10 million patients worldwide

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