

DISCUSSION

The incidence of erectile dysfunction in Taiwanese males has never been accurately surveyed and studied. The most precise studies were conducted on males of different ages in various communities. At

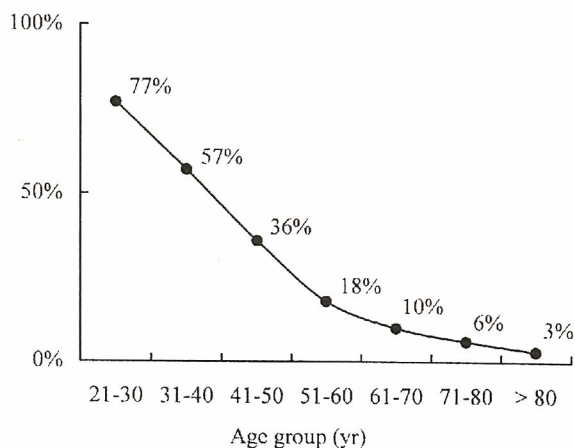


Fig. 2. Remarkable decline in the percentage of normal erectile function (IEEF score of 22-25) as patients age.

present, only 1 study of this kind has been carried out in Massachusetts of the US, the proportion of erectile dysfunction patients were found to increase with age.³ The subjects of this study in Taiwan were patients of urological departments, a very specific population. Some of the urological patients had been suffering from erectile dysfunction, while others may have been suffering from other diseases. The average age of the urological patients may be higher than that of the total population, and they have many diseases of the elderly such as prostatic hyperplasia and neurogenic bladder. Thus, these subjects may not accurately represent the population of Taiwan. Furthermore, male patients seeking medical advice may have sexual disorders resulting from psychological factors. The proportion of patients suffering from erectile disorder may be higher than that of the general population of Taiwan. However, the sample size in this study is large, with 5939 urologic male patients of different ages. The prevalence in this large-scale study may be reliable as a general population survey. It is also confirmed by similar results in our previous study.⁴

Table 2. Age Distribution of the 5939 Urological Patients

Age group(yr)	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	> 80	Total
IEEF								
22-25 (Normal)	213 (77%)	518 (57%)	640 (36%)	237 (18%)	113 (10%)	27 (6%)	1 (3%)	1749 (29%)
12-21 (Slight dysfunction)	59 (21%)	376 (41%)	1011 (57%)	924 (70%)	711 (63%)	234 (49%)	13 (33%)	3328 (57%)
8-11 (Medium dysfunction)	3 (1%)	14 (2%)	110 (6%)	116 (9%)	216 (19%)	128 (27%)	13 (33%)	600 (10%)
≤ 7 (Severe dysfunction)	2 (1%)	8 (1%)	23 (1%)	41 (3%)	86 (8%)	90 (19%)	12 (31%)	262 (4%)
Total	277 (5%)	916 (15%)	1784 (30%)	1318 (22%)	1126 (19%)	479 (8%)	39 (1%)	5939 (100%) (100%)

Table 3. Percentage of Medium to Severe ED (IEEF ≤ 11) Increasing with Aging in 5939 Patients. The Increase in Percentage is Even More Prominent after the Age Period of 61 to 70 Years

Age group	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	> 80
Percentage with medium to severe ED (IEEF ≤ 11)	2%	3%	7%	12%	27%	46%	64%
Percentage increase		1%	4%	5%	15% ^a	19%	18%

^a Cutoff for a remarkable increase which was significant with a linear regression test.