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CHANGING TREATMENT ALGORITHM FOR ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION FOLLOWING RADICAL PROSTATECTOMY: VIAGRA ERA 1998 AND BEYOND

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Introduction and Objective: The treatment algorithm in patients with erectile dysfunction (ED) after radical prostatectomy (RP) changed when the first oral therapy - sildenafil citrate- became available. This prospective study assessed the sexual outcomes and treatment choices of a radical prostatectomy population with erectile dysfunction. **Methods:** A review of a single surgical series (1999-2003) identified 176 sexually active patients who underwent nerve sparing (NS) or non-nerve sparing (non-NS) RP. All patients received regular follow-up at 6-9 months intervals. The patients were questioned regarding their erectile status at each visit using Sexual Health Inventory of Male (abridged IIEF-15 questionnaire). Sexual counseling was done at each visit and standard treatment options like vacuum constriction device (VCD), intracavernous injection (IC) or medicated urethral system for erection (MUSE) were offered. Since its introduction, sildenafil citrate has been offered to all patients regardless of their previous therapy of erectile status. At each visit, therapy for erectile dysfunction (ED) was modulated to achieve the maximum patient satisfaction. **Results:** A sexually active population of 176 patients (SHIM score ≥ 16), of mean age 63 years, underwent NS 112/176 (63.6%) and 64/176 non-NS (36.3%) RP. Though 18% (32 of 176) patients regained natural erections (34% NS, 4% non-NS) sufficient for successful vaginal intercourse after surgery, 78% (25 of 32) patients were dissatisfied with the quality of erections and sought adjuvant treatment. ED after RP was observed in 78% (138 of 176) patients. Though 43% (59 of 138) of the ED patients post operatively attempted standard treatments (IC penile injections, MUSE, and VCD), no adjuvant therapy was sought by 57% (79 of 138) patients. With the introduction of oral therapy with sildenafil citrate, 42% (33 of 79) of the patients in the no-treatment subgroup tried treatments for ED for the first time. In the patients who were already taking standard treatments, 57.6% (34 of 59) patients switched to sildenafil citrate when it was offered as an option. **Conclusions:** While 18% of patients regained natural erectile function, nearly 80% of these patient seek adjuvant treatments to enhance the quality of erections. Though sexually active preoperatively, nearly 57% of the patients with ED did not seek any treatment. With the introduction of sildenafil citrate, one third of these patients were encouraged to try treatment for the first time.

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