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IN THE NEWS

Blood pressure drug reverses sexual dysfunction

When treating blood pressure using drug therapy, The Life Extension Foundation long ago recommended that members ask their doctors to prescribe either Cozaar or Hyzaar.

These drugs are known as angiotension II receptor antagonists because of their unique mechanism to block the receptor sites of cells involved in inducing vascular constriction. Hypertension is often caused by arterial inelasticity, also known as vascular constriction.

While old-line anti-hypertensive drugs such as the calcium channel blockers continue to be heavily promoted to doctors, Life Extension members were told years ago that Cozaar or Hyzaar were the superior class of drugs. Some studies suggest that short acting calcium channel blockers increase mortality, (1-3) while the angiotension II receptor antagonist drugs like Cozaar and Hyzaar are remarkably safe and effective.



A new study has just come out indicating that the active ingredient in Cozaar and Hyaar (losartan) can significantly improve sex lives of men who suffer from sexual dysfunction. This makes sense based on the beneficial mechanism of action these drugs induce on the vascular system.

According to a report released by Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, sexual dysfunction in men with high blood pressure was aided by Cozaar.

In a group of hypertensive men treated with Cozaar, 88% reported improvement in at least one area of sexual dysfunction after twelve weeks of treatment. The percentage of men reporting impotence dropped from 75.3 to 11.8.

In men taking Cozaar, the number of sexually dysfunctional men reporting overall sexual satisfaction increased from 7.3% to 58.5%. The number reporting a high frequency (at least once a week) of sexual activity improved from 40.5% to 62.3%. Improved quality of life was reported by 73.7% of the men with sexual dysfunction. In a small group of women tested, similar results were reported.

It is important to note that these improvements only occurred in those who reported sexual dysfunction to begin with. In other words, Cozaar does not act as an aphrodisiac in those with normal sexual function, but for those whose sex lives are compromised by hypertension, Cozaar was shown in this study to produce significant sexual-enhancing effects.



Since other classes of anti-hypertension drugs often cause sexual dysfunction, this study provides a basis for those who need drugs to control blood pressure to ask their doctor for Cozaar, which consists purely of losartan. If a diuretic is needed to, then your doctor will have to prescribe Hyzaar, which consists of losartin plus a diuretic. Since diuretics can induce sexual dysfunction, Hyzaar may not produce these effects of reversing sexual dysfunction.

The dose of Cozaar used in this study was 50 mg to 100 mg a day. This study was published in the May 2001 issue of the American Journal of the Medical Sciences.

The anti-hypertensive effects of Cozaar and Hyzaar sometimes wear off after 12 hours, meaning that the drug should be prescribed so that the patients can take one tablet twice a day. It is critical to avoid blood pressure peaks, and a twice a day unit dosing of Hyzaar or Cozaar reduces the risks of blood pressure elevations occurring near the end of the dosing cycle.

Foundation members have had the benefit of knowing that Cozaar or Hyzaar are the drugs of choice in treating hypertension. The general public, on the other hand, have unknowingly been prescribed dangerous anti-hypertensive drugs that are heavily promoted to doctors by pharmaceutical companies. These old-line drugs make lots of money

for the drug companies, but are not in the best interests of the hypertensive patient.

Editors note: There are natural approaches to controlling blood pressure that can also help to improve the sex lives of men and women. High doses of arginine have been shown to enhance sexual arousal, satisfaction and performance.(4-9) High doses of the essential fatty acids GLA and DHA can also help control blood pressure.(10-12) Anyone considering using these natural approaches should do so under the care of their physician. For general information on natural approaches to controlling blood pressure, refer to The Foundation's Hypertension Protocol contained in the Disease Prevention and Treatment reference book or on The Foundation's website (www.lef.org). For specific information about using GLA and DHA to help control blood pressure, see the "Fats For Life" article in this issue.

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Is your dog too fat?

If Fido is getting a little tubby, you might try DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone). Dogs that participated in a study at the University of Wisconsin lost weight without reducing food intake. The doggy participants were all at least 25% overweight. The average weight-loss was 3% per month for the dogs that responded (68%). In addition to weight, cholesterol, triglycerides and cortisol dropped sharply. A follow-up study was done using DHEA plus a low-fat, high-fiber diet. DHEA caused greater weight-loss than the diet alone. No toxicity occurred at DHEA levels of 30 mg/kg to 75 mg/kg. (Note: although similar studies on cats have not been published, DHEA has been given to felines for other reasons, and no toxicity has been reported).

Researchers at Louisiana State University have done a series of studies on fat rats using DHEA. The rats, known as Zucker rats, are genetically obese. Even if a Zucker rat is on a diet its whole life, it will still get fat. However, when DHEA is given, a number of important changes occur. Body fat and stomach fat decrease. Insulin, cholesterol and triglycerides drop. Leptin, a messenger of fat stores, decreases. The big question is, How does it work? Researchers are pursuing the full answer, but for now there are clues.

DHEA is an anti-stress hormone that apparently interacts with thyroid hormone. The relationship is so close that some have suggested that thyroid induces the synthesis of DHEA. On the other hand, it has been shown that DHEA increases thyroid hormones under stress conditions. People with low thyroid tend to have low DHEA, and vice-versa. Like thyroid, DHEA can provoke the body into using fat for fuel. Like thyroid, DHEA can also cause the body to generate heat, using up energy.

In addition, it appears that DHEA has a positive effect on insulin and glucose. This may, in turn, affect levels of leptin. Leptin is very important in weight-loss. This hormone is made in fat cells, and it tells the brain how much fat to store. Leptin is also the little devil that downregulates metabolism when fat stores get low (i.e., when you diet). Obese people have more leptin, thin people have less. In a study on non-obese humans, researchers found that DHEA decreased leptin in women's stomach fat but not in men's. The effect is probably indirect, through insulin. It may also involve growth hormone. In another study, rats on a high-fat diet had fewer fat cells and less body fat when given DHEA.

Animals with diabetes may get double benefits. In a study from Japan, DHEA was given for 15 days to insulin-resistant, diabetic mice. It worked as well as troglitazone (Rezulin) for lowering blood glucose.

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