

ORIGINAL RESEARCH—ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

Australian Gay and Bisexual Men's Use of Erectile Dysfunction Medications During Recent Sexual Encounters

Garrett Prestage, PhD,*† Fengyi Jin, PhD,* Benjamin Bavinton, BA, MPH,* Andrew Grulich, PhD,* Graham Brown, PhD,†† Marian Pitts, PhD,† and Michael Hurley, PhD†

*Kirby Institute, University of New South Wales, Kensington, NSW, Australia; †Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Vic., Australia; ††Western Australian Centre for Health Promotion Research, Curtin Health Innovation Research Institute, Curtin University, Perth, WA, Australia

DOI: 10.1111/jsm.12407

ABSTRACT

Aim. Use of erectile dysfunction medications (EDMs) is relatively common among gay and bisexual men and has been associated with human immunodeficiency virus sexual risk behavior. We aimed to determine what factors were related to EDM use on occasions when participants engaged in protected anal intercourse (PAIC) and when they engaged in unprotected anal intercourse (UAIC) with casual partners.

Methods. An online cross-sectional survey was conducted, resulting in a sample of 1,376 Australian gay and bisexual men who reported an occasion of anal intercourse with casual male partners in the previous year.

Main Outcome Measure. The main outcome measure was the use of EDM during most recent occasions of PAIC and UAIC.

Results. Men were as likely to use EDM on occasions when they were using condoms (11.6%) as they were on occasions when they did not use condoms (13.0%). There was no association between use of EDM and self-esteem, nor was there an association between sexual risk behavior and self-esteem. Men who used EDM were more sexually active overall and appeared to often use EDM to enhance and extend their sexual experiences.

Conclusions. Men did not appear to use EDM specifically for the purposes of risk-taking and mainly used EDM to enhance sexual pleasure. Mental health issues were not indicated by use of EDM. **Prestage G, Jin FY, Bavinton B, Grulich A, Brown G, Pitts M, and Hurley M. Australian gay and bisexual men's use of erectile dysfunction medications during recent sexual encounters. J Sex Med 2014;11:809–819.**

Key Words. HIV; Sexual Risk; Gay Men; Self-Esteem; Erectile Dysfunction Medication; PDE 5 Inhibitors; Men Who have Sex with Men; Sexuality; Sexual Behavior

Introduction

Erectile dysfunction medications (EDMs), mainly phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors, are commonly used for therapeutic purposes to treat erectile dysfunction [1]. However, some men use EDM to enhance and extend their sexual pleasure, and among gay and bisexual men (GBM), such “recreational” use of EDM is relatively common [2–5].

Erectile dysfunction can profoundly impact men's sense of masculinity and self-esteem [6,7], although it is arguable that the “dysfunction” may often be due to an overemphasis on erectile func-

tion as a core component of masculinity [8–11]. Also, among more sexually active GBM, use of EDM may be as much about enhanced sexual performance and practical methods of maximizing pleasure as it is about addressing perceived problems of erectile dysfunction [12].

The prospect of recreational use of EDM among GBM has raised concerns about the possibility of increases in “unsafe sex” [13]. Use of EDM among GBM is often associated with participating in highly sexually active networks and with having engaged in unprotected anal intercourse (i.e., not including “with casual partners”) [14–18]. It is often accompanied by the use of

club drugs such as methamphetamine [3,14,19–22]. This phenomenon has been described as “intensive sex partying” and is associated with “sexually adventurous” gay subcultures [4,23]. The use of both EDM and club drugs have been identified as risk factors in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) sexual risk behavior and HIV infection, particularly when used in combination [4,14,16–18,21,24–30]. Elsewhere, it has been noted that GBM increase their use of these drugs, including EDM, in the context of partying when they believe that other men also intend to use them [31]. In this context, we have argued that while some EDM use may be due to some erectile dysfunction, the primary purpose appears to be recreational—to enhance and extend sexual experience [4,23].

In an earlier study of GBM who engaged in group sex, we found that they were very likely to engage in sexual risk behavior and to use EDM [17]. Moreover, the majority of the men who also used drugs, including EDM, on an occasion of group sex, indicated that they did so specifically to enhance and extend the sexual experience, and for some, to permit them to engage in more sex, with more partners, than they might otherwise find possible. Half of the men in that study who reported using EDM during group sex also indicated that they used amyl nitrite on this same occasion, despite it being specifically contraindicated [32]. A similar proportion also reported that, on the same occasion, they used methamphetamine, which commonly has the effect of reducing men’s capacity to achieve and sustain erections [33,34]. EDM can help counteract these effects [35]. Use of EDM in this context is not so much about preexisting erectile dysfunction as it is about enabling the use of other drugs to ensure that the sought-after heightened sexual experience can be achieved.

These same behaviors have also been associated with men’s sense of their own masculinity, of which sexual performance is perceived to be an important component [30,36–40]. In our previous work among GBM who engaged in group sex, a masculine self-belief was often particularly important [37]. For many, their concept of masculinity involved being highly sexually active and being able to demonstrate sexual performance within the group sex setting. The term “sexpig”—or more simply “pig”—has been used to describe GBM who seek “as much sex as [they] can get with as many different men as possible, often in the form of group sex that includes barebacking, water sports, fisting, and S/M” [41]. For many GBM who describe them-

selves as sexpigs, their sexuality is often represented as hypermasculinized, although masculine status is often acquired through “voracious bottoming” (taking the receptive position during anal sex with multiple partners) [41]. “Sexual sensation seeking,” which certainly includes attitudes to sexual performance among its component items, has also been similarly associated with indicators of being more sexually adventurous, HIV sexual risk behavior, and the use of EDM [3,38,42,43]. Whereas men who self-identify as “sexpigs” positively assert their own (hyper)sexuality, the measure of sexual sensation seeking is used to identify men who are psychologically predisposed toward multiple partners and more adventurous sexual behaviors; men who can be described as “sensation seekers” exhibit desires and behaviors that are often assumed to be pathological in nature.

Aims

We investigated the use of EDM in relation to social, community, and sexual identity and engagement, self-esteem, sexual desire, and risk behavior during encounters involving protected anal intercourse with casual partners (PAIC) and encounters involving unprotected anal intercourse with casual partners (UAIC) among Australian GBM. We sought to identify variables that were independently associated with EDM use during both PAIC and UAIC occasions.

Methods

Procedures

This was a cross-sectional study of Australian GBM conducted in 2009 using an anonymous online survey to investigate their beliefs about HIV and the risks of HIV transmission [44]. No identifying details, including IP addresses or cookies, were collected. No compensation for participation was provided. All participants were provided with information about what participation entailed prior to direct access to the survey questionnaire. As this was an anonymous survey, completion of the survey questions was taken as consent, in accordance with National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines, and with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New South Wales and of La Trobe University.

Participants

Men were eligible for the study if they were aged 18 or above, gay- or bisexual-identified, or had had

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4270041>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4270041>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)