

Gum Disease and Bedroom Bummer for Men

Erectile dysfunction associated with periodontitis



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Living with erectile dysfunction, or impotence, can be a huge blow to a man's ego and, in some cases, his health. If doctors know who is at risk, they can take steps to stop erection problems.

Men with periodontitis, a severe form of gum disease, may have an increased risk of impotence.

Studies have shown links between impotence and heart disease. In addition, they have shown that diseases like periodontitis also may be linked to heart disease.

With these common links in mind, a team of researchers from the Far Eastern Memorial Hospital and the Heng-Ching Lin School of Care Administration at Taipei Medical University in Taiwan set out to see if there was an associated between periodontitis and impotence.

The researchers included Wei-Che Wu, Shiu-Dong Chung, and Heng-Ching Lin.

They found that gum disease was much more common among men with impotence than among men without this sexual problem.

After the researchers took into account other factors - such as income, location, diabetes, and

alcohol abuse among others - the results showed that men suffering from impotence were more likely to have gum disease.

The link between gum disease and impotence was especially strong in men under the age of 30 and over the age of 70.

"There are certainly some flaws in the methodology of this study but it is a well powered population study," says Parviz Kavoussi, M.D., a urologist at Austin Fertility & Reproductive Medicine in Austin, Texas.

"It is well known that ED may be a predictor for coronary artery disease. It is recommended that men presenting with ED, especially younger men, are screened for coronary artery disease as they have a higher likelihood of a coronary event in their lifetime than their age matched counterparts," explains Dr. Kavoussi, who was not involved in the study.

"It has been suggested in previous studies that periodontitis may be associated with heart disease as well. In this study, the strongest association between periodontitis and ED was found in men below the age of 30 and above the age of 70. This may be a reflection of silent coronary artery disease in the elder group."

According to the authors, "This study is the first population-based study that suggested that periodontitis patients are at higher risk for [erectile dysfunction]."

"Overall, this study brings up an interesting issue which has the potential to impact our screening for both disease processes if it is supported by higher levels of evidence in the future," says Dr. Kavoussi.

For their study, the researchers compared 32,856 men with impotence to 162,480 patients without the condition. The researchers followed participants for five years to see who developed periodontitis.

Of the patients with impotence, 26.9 percent (8,825 individuals) were diagnosed with periodontitis. In comparison, 9.4 percent (15,469 individuals) of those without the sexual disorder developed periodontitis.

This study was set to be presented at the American Urological Association's 2012 Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. As such, it has yet to be evaluated by a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

Reporter: Travis Hill

Reviewer: Joseph V. Madia, M.D.

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Parviz Kavoussi, M.D.



Parviz Kavoussi, M.D. is an expert in erectile dysfunction, sexual medicine and male infertility. He is in practice with his infertility specialist father and brother where they pride themselves in being a family that helps others start their families.

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