



PRESS RELEASE

THE TABOO ILLNESS CAUSING 60% OF MEN TO BECOME DEPRESSED AND A QUARTER TO GIVE UP ON SEX

It's time we start talking about devastating bent penis disease says UK charity

New research into a little talked about condition affecting the penis has revealed the devastating mental toll on those affected.

Around 1 in 20 UK men suffer from Peyronie's disease, which causes the erect penis to bend and shorten, and can make erections painful and sex difficult or impossible.

But a new survey of 185 men with Peyronie's disease released today by charity the British Dupuytren's Society to mark the start of Men's Health Week reveals the extent to which the illness also affects mental health.

A staggering 60% of men admit they have suffered depression following their diagnosis, with a quarter saying it has negatively affected their relationship - 1 in 10 relationships have broken down completely. A quarter of men with Peyronies (24%) are no longer sexually active.

20% of those surveyed felt they would be laughed at if they talked about their condition, with the result that over 1 in 10 sufferers (11%) have not told anyone about their problem – not even a doctor.

For those men who have visited a doctor, 45% felt their doctor wasn't helpful, with 15% told nothing could be done to help and 40% not offered any treatment at all.

Birgir Gislason, trustee of the British Dupuytren's Society said: 'It's time we started talking about this condition and the effect it is having on men. At present men with this condition are isolated and depressed, with many offered no solutions from their doctor despite the fact that there are treatments out there. We were shocked to discover the true impact this is having on men and feel that sufferers need to be offered a range of treatments, as well as psychological support, during what can be a very difficult time.'

Dr Noelle Robertson, Consultant Clinical Psychologist said: "Peyronie's disease is a condition that can be both painful and distressing, and may adversely affect quality of life for men and their partners. In addition to its negative impact on intimacy, sexual activity and satisfaction, psychologically it can significantly affect mood, self-esteem and masculinity. Evidence suggests that men may be reluctant to disclose their distress and clinicians may not realise the considerable psychological burden experienced by their patients. Any initiative to increase awareness of the condition and its impact is likely to be welcomed by patients and professionals alike."

Mr David Ralph, Consultant Urologist said: 'The medical profession needs to improve the care it gives to those with Peyronie's disease. Too many doctors are not educated about the disease and the treatments that can be used. We have a variety of options available to us from oral drugs, to injections and as a last resort, surgery. I would like to see each patient be referred to an expert in the field and try a range of treatment options.'

The British Dupuytren's Society represents a number of related conditions including Dupuytren's disease, Ledderhose disease, frozen shoulder and Peyronie's disease. The charity is fundraising to provide support for men with Peyronie's disease and raise awareness. For more information visit <http://dupuytren-society.org.uk/information/peyronies-disease>, follow britdupsoc on Facebook, or use the hashtag #StandUpforPeyronies. You can donate at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/standupforpeyronies>

The campaign is supported by the Primary Care Urology Society and the Sexual Advice Association.

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Notes to editors

- A survey of 185 men with Peyronie's disease was carried out via SurveyMonkey from 16 February - 18 March 2016
- Peyronie's disease is a build-up of collagen, known as a plaque, in the penis. This causes the penis to bend when erect, which is painful during the initial phase and can make sex difficult or impossible.
- The illness is most common between the ages of 41 and 60 and around 30% of Peyronie's disease sufferers also have or will develop a condition called Dupuytren's disease in the hand or hands and Ledderhose disease in the feet.
- The cause of Peyronie's disease is unknown, but it is believed trauma to the penis, such as a sexual injury or operation, could be to blame. There is also a link with high blood pressure and the medication used to treat it. Vitamin E deficiency and a genetic disposition to the illness have also been suggested as risk factors.
- In around one in ten cases the inflammation can reduce by itself and the problems will settle down. Most men with Peyronie's disease will need to be referred to a urologist for treatment. A variety of treatments are available from traction devices, to oral medication, to injections to break down the plaque. Surgery is the last resort for Peyronie's patients suffering with severe curvature.
- The British Dupuytren's Society provides support and information to people affected with Dupuytren's disease, Ledderhose disease, Peyronie's disease and related conditions. It also raises awareness, works to improve knowledge of the treatments available, and encourages research into prevention and treatment. www.dupuytren-society.org.uk