

Results of an Observational Study in 574 Community Pharmacies in Spain Characterizing Patient Profiles of Men Asking for Erectile Dysfunction Medication

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Objective: To characterize patient profiles of men asking for an erectile dysfunction (ED) treatment at the pharmacy.

Materials and Methods: Multi-center, observational, cross-sectional study carried out in community pharmacies in Spain. Each investigator was asked to recruit one patient with a prescription for an ED treatment (Rx-group) and one patient that came into the pharmacy without prescription but asking for an ED treatment (Non-Rx group). Study pharmacists completed a questionnaire asking the patient demographic, clinical and behavioral questions including the SHIM (Sexual Health Inventory for Men), which evaluates ED severity. Mean values and 95%CI were calculated and ANOVA and Chi-square test were used for continuous and categorical data, respectively. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Clínico San Carlos Hospital (Madrid) and was supported by the Spanish Association of Community Pharmacists (SEFAC).

Results: 574 pharmacists throughout Spain recruited 1147 patients, whereof 1113 (97%) were included for analysis. Mean age was 58.5 (95%CI = 57.6-59.4, age range 21-91) years for the Rx-group and 54.8 (95%CI = 53.8-55.9) years for the Non-Rx group ($p < 0.001$). There was no statistical difference between the groups regarding weight, BMI, known hypertension, diabetes mellitus, hypercholesterolemia, dyslipidemia, depression and stress. Median SHIM score was 13.9 (95%CI = 13.5-14.4) and 14.0 (95%CI = 13.6-14.4) for the Rx and the Non-Rx group, respectively ($p = 0.7892$) which correspond to mild to moderate ED. In the Non-Rx group, 85.1% of men asked for a prescription medicine (PDE5 inhibitor) and the remaining patients asked for herbal remedies, food supplements or vitamins. Patients of both groups take about 25 months since the first symptoms until they present with a healthcare professional. In the Non-Rx group 60,2% stated that this visit in the pharmacy was the first time they had spoken with a Healthcare Professional about their erection problems.

Conclusions: Men without a prescription for ED treatment have the same degree of ED and an equal co-morbidity profile as men who have a prescription for a PDE5 inhibitor. Therefore community pharmacists should be actively trained on this condition as they may play a relevant role by educating men

about ED and encouraging them to seek further medical care, because ED might be a sign of underlying conditions.

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