

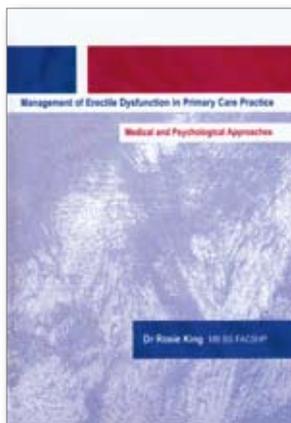
Management of Erectile Dysfunction in Primary Care Practice

Medical and Psychological Approaches

Rosie King

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The management of men with erectile dysfunction (ED) has changed dramatically over the past few years. When I was going through university, treatments emphasised the psychobehavioural (with resultant very low success rates), but with the advent of the phosphodiesterase inhibitors (PDE5Is) the treatment has become increasingly medicalised (and a lot more successful, if gaining an erection is the main criterion of success!) There are now three PDE5Is on the market, along with injectable agents, and more products will become available in the future. The marketing of these so-called 'lifestyle' drugs has been aggressive. 'Viagra' has entered the cultural lexicon, and general practitioners have been pushed to the front line of treatment, whether or not they ever wished this to occur!

Unfortunately, though, there has been little reliable information for GPs that hasn't originated from the pharmaceutical companies. However, Dr Rosie King has come up with a gem of a guidebook for those health professionals wanting to know more. At 367 pages there is a lot of information, but she makes it user friendly with an introduction (which gives an overview, information on common causes, and details of the male sexual response), and then moving on to the 'Four Step Plan'. This certainly makes the somewhat fraught (for the GP, at least) subject of ED a lot more comprehensible and a lot less threatening.

The Four-Step Plan involves the stages of detecting, evaluating, managing, and following up. The author goes through each stage in impressive detail, but makes it easy to follow and understand. The claims of the pharmaceutical companies about their PDE5Is are dissected and exposed to the hard glare of an evidence based approach, with particular reference to the GP situation.

Liberal usage of diagrams and tables makes the wealth of data easy to digest. Humour is also used to good effect, such as this gem of a quote by a heart researcher regarding the dangers of extramarital sex for the male:

'Heart beats stay at normal rate
When one beds down with legal mate,
But roosting in another's nest
Flirts with cardiac arrest.'

As well as the purely medical management of ED there is an excellent section on psychogenic ED and the assessment and management of this with cognitive and behavioural strategies. Those involved in treating patients will find this section particularly useful, as it is an area that is not covered succinctly in many other texts. Helpful summaries are also included.

The book is well referenced and there are patient handouts, which can be photocopied and given to patients and their partner(s).

There are some aspects of Dr King's book, however, that I feel could have been improved. There is no index, which is unusual in such a book, although the contents pages are comprehensive and this means that finding particular topics is not too difficult. Also, perhaps a bit too much attention is devoted to the pharmaceutical companies and their sometimes excessive claims about their respective products – the points (though well made) are laboured somewhat.

Also lacking is a glossary. A large number of acronyms are found throughout the book, and those readers dipping into a chapter for some information may not be able to readily decipher the acronyms that frequently occur. Another concern is that at the time of writing this review, the websites at the end of the book from which the reader can purchase other Rosie King titles, cannot be found.

My quibbles, however, are not at all major, and should not detract from the fact that this is an impressive book written by someone with a great ability to communicate (helped by a lovely sense of humour), and who also possesses a good command of the topic.

This book would be useful for GPs and registrars with an interest in men's health, along with some practice nurses. Those with an interest in sexual health, and even cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and depression, would also find value in having this text within easy reach.

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