



EDTREATMENT.INFO

Comprehensive Study on the Impact of Erectile Dysfunction

Nicholson, Robert T. – ED Treatment Information Center
March 30, 2018

Abstract

A survey of 597 adult men suffering from erectile dysfunction found high levels of stress, dissatisfaction with medical care and treatment options, and mental health issues.

A significant majority of men:

- were dissatisfied with the care provided by their doctors and therapists
- were dissatisfied with the treatments they had tried
- felt that their condition had a negative impact on their self-esteem and their relationships, and
- were uncomfortable discussing their erectile dysfunction

Methodology

A survey instrument consisting of 73 questions was developed and presented on an online survey platform¹. Participants were recruited for the survey through posts on online media². Posts included paid placements on FaceBook.com.

A total of 694 participants began the survey, but 97 either (1) did not suffer from ED, or (2) did not complete the survey. These 97 responses were discarded.

¹ SurveyMonkey.com

² EDtreatment.info, FaceBook.com, FrankTalk.org, LinkedIn.com, SupportGroups.com, Patient.info, ProstateCancerInfoLink.ning.com, Reddit.com

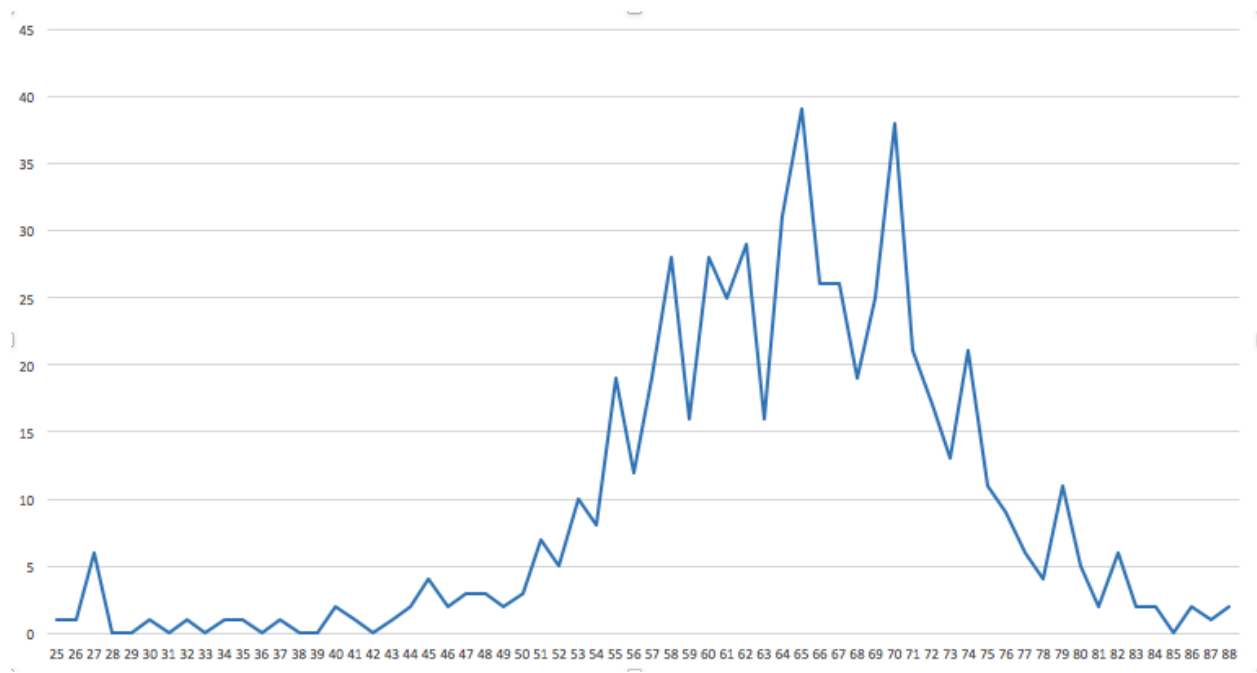
Results

Participant Data

AGE

| MINIMUM | MEAN | MEDIAN | MAXIMUM |
|---------|------|--------|---------|
| 25 | 64.1 | 65 | 88 |

AGE DISTRIBUTION



YEARS WITH ED

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| < 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | >15 |
| 36 | 41 | 116 | 74 | 57 | 85 | 116 | 38 | 34 |
| 6.0% | 6.9% | 19.4% | 12.4% | 9.5% | 14.2% | 19.4% | 6.4% | 5.7% |

DEGREE OF ED*

| MILD | MODERATE | SEVERE |
|------|----------|--------|
| 43 | 223 | 331 |
| 7.2% | 36.4% | 55.4% |

* The degree of Erectile Dysfunction was self-assessed by survey participants and does not correspond to standard SHIM³ assessments.

OTHER CONDITIONS

The majority (56.4%) of men responding also suffer from one or more conditions related to their erectile dysfunction.

| URINARY INCONTINENCE | URINARY RETENTION | PREMATURE EJACULATION | DIFFICULTY EJACULATING | INABILITY TO EJACULATE | PEYRONIE'S DISEASE | NONE |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| 95 | 92 | 161 | 142 | 106 | 20 | 206 |
| 15.9% | 15.4% | 27.0% | 23.8% | 17.8% | 3.4% | 43.6% |

³ SHIM: Sexual Health Inventory for Men is the standard questionnaire used to categorize Erectile Dysfunction.

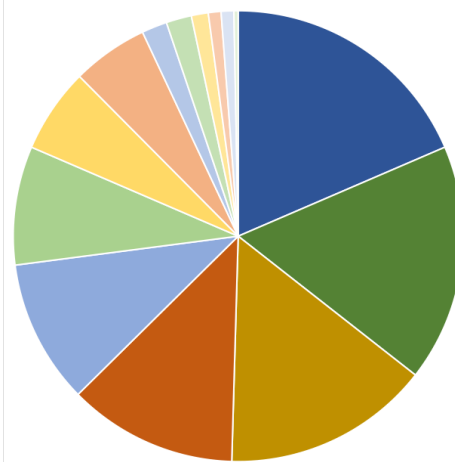
Diagnosed Causes of ED

MEDICAL CAUSES⁴

Approximately 1/3 of the participants (193) stated that a doctor had diagnosed a medical cause for their erectile dysfunction. It is significant that most respondents were seeking treatment for their condition without having a clear idea of the underlying cause.

(Note that some respondents reported multiple diagnosed causes.)

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------|----|--------|
| | DIABETES | 61 | 31.60% |
| | PROSTATE SURGERY / RADIATION | 56 | 20.00% |
| | LOW TESTOSTERONE | 49 | 25.40% |
| | SIDE EFFECTS OF MEDICATION | 40 | 20.70% |
| | OTHER | 34 | 17.60% |
| | HEART DISEASE | 28 | 14.50% |
| | CIRCULATORY PROBLEMS | 20 | 10.40% |
| | OBESITY | 18 | 9.30% |
| | OTHER SURGERIES | 6 | 3.10% |
| | INJURY | 6 | 3.10% |
| | PEYRONIE'S DISEASE | 4 | 2.10% |
| | MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS | 3 | 1.60% |
| | ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE | 3 | 1.60% |
| | PARKINSON'S DISEASE | 1 | 0.50% |
| | | | 161.5% |



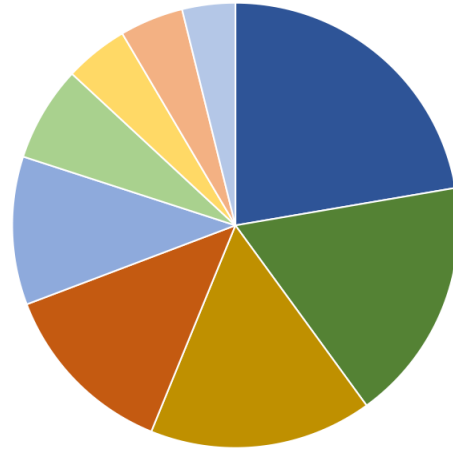
⁴ The proportions of ED causes vary significantly from one study to another. This may be due to the breakdown of categories presented in each study, or the community from which the survey respondents are drawn.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES

Approximately 10% of the participants (59) stated that a therapist had diagnosed a psychological cause for their erectile dysfunction.

(Note that some respondents reported multiple diagnosed causes.)

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------|----|---------|
| | PERFORMANCE ANXIETY | 29 | 49.20% |
| | STRESS | 23 | 39.00% |
| | DEPRESSION | 21 | 35.60% |
| | ANXIETY | 17 | 28.80% |
| | RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS | 14 | 23.70% |
| | LOW SELF-ESTEEM | 9 | 15.30% |
| | ANGER | 6 | 10.20% |
| | OTHER | 6 | 10.20% |
| | PTSD | 5 | 8.50% |
| | | | 220.50% |



Degree of Treatment Satisfaction

SATISFACTION WITH DOCTOR / COUNSELOR

A significant majority of men are “Not at All” or “Not Very” satisfied with the treatment received from their doctors or counselors.

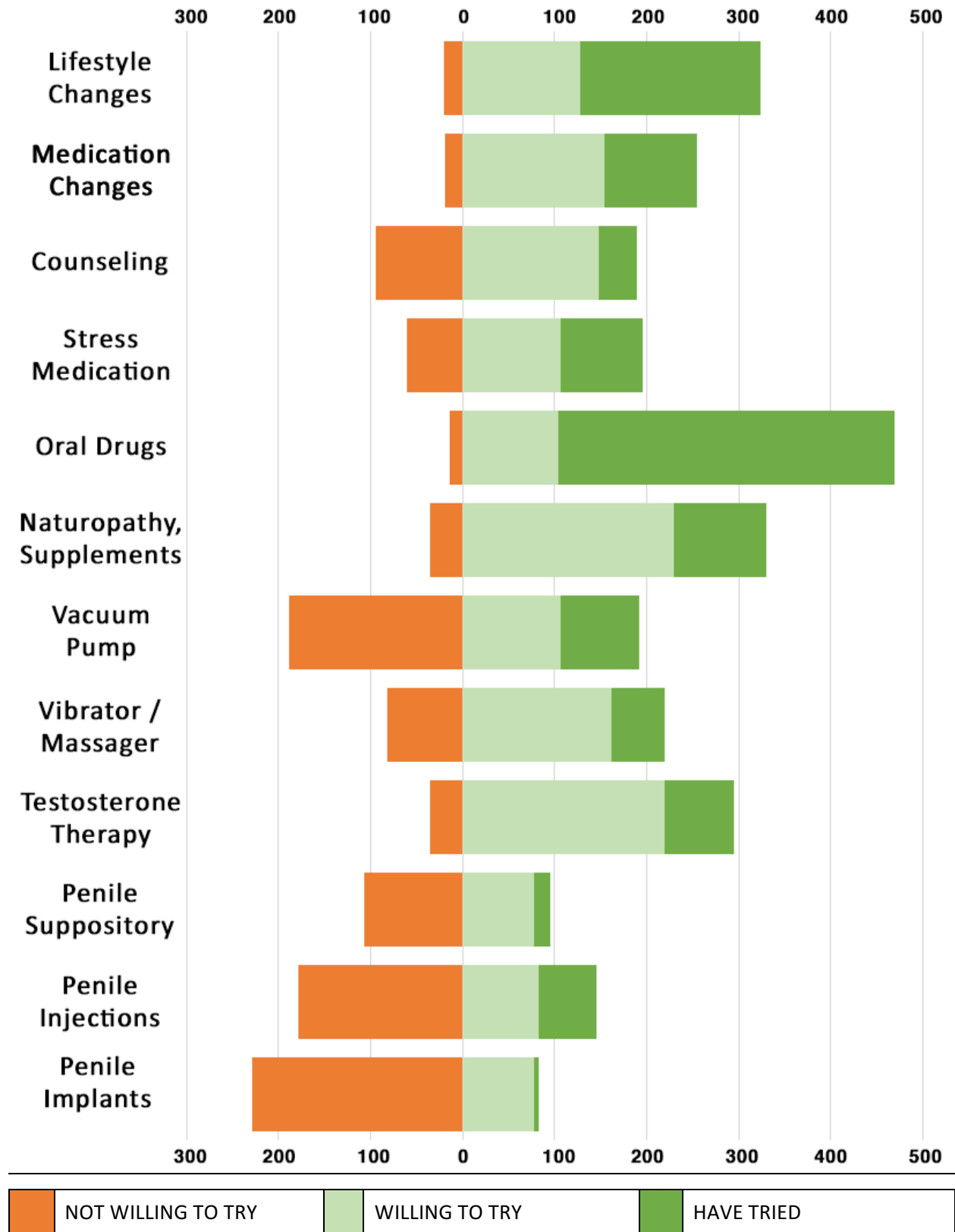
| | TOTAL NEGATIVE | NOT AT ALL | NOT VERY | SOMEWHAT | VERY | TOTAL POSITIVE |
|-----------|----------------|------------|----------|----------|------|----------------|
| DOCTOR | 333 | 181 | 152 | 111 | 26 | 137 |
| | 70.8% | 38.5% | 32.3% | 23.6% | 5.5% | 29.1 |
| COUNSELOR | 134 | 84 | 50 | 33 | 3 | 36 |
| | 78.8% | 49.4% | 29.4% | 19.4% | 1.8% | 21.2% |

WILLINGNESS TO TRY TREATMENT OPTIONS

A majority of men are “Willing to Consider,” or “Have Tried,” lifestyle changes or natural supplements. Fewer men are willing to consider medical treatments; very few express willingness to try penile injections or penile implants.

| | WOULD NOT CONSIDER | WOULD CONSIDER | HAVE TRIED | NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION | N/A |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|------------------------|-------|
| LIFESTYLE CHANGES | 20 | 128 | 195 | 140 | 82 |
| | 3.5% | 22.7% | 34.5% | 24.8% | 14.5% |
| MEDICATION CHANGES | 19 | 154 | 100 | 166 | 115 |
| | 3.4% | 27.8% | 18.1% | 30.0% | 20.8% |
| COUNSELING | 94 | 148 | 41 | 166 | 99 |
| | 17.2% | 27.0% | 7.5% | 30.3% | 18.1% |
| STRESS MEDICATION | 61 | 106 | 89 | 143 | 136 |
| | 11.4% | 19.8% | 16.6% | 26.7% | 25.4% |
| ORAL DRUGS | 14 | 104 | 365 | 29 | 14 |
| | 2.7% | 19.8% | 69.4% | 5.5% | 2.7% |
| NATUROPATHY, SUPPLEMENTS | 36 | 229 | 101 | 129 | 22 |
| | 7.0% | 44.3% | 19.5% | 25.0% | 4.3% |
| VACUUM PUMP | 169 | 107 | 85 | 138 | 15 |
| | 32.9% | 20.8% | 16.5% | 26.8% | 2.9% |
| VIBRATOR / MASSAGER | 82 | 162 | 58 | 178 | 27 |
| | 16.2% | 32.0% | 11.4% | 35.1% | 5.3% |
| TESTOSTERONE THERAPY | 35 | 220 | 75 | 131 | 41 |
| | 7.0% | 43.8% | 14.9% | 26.1% | 8.2% |
| PENILE SUPPOSITORIES | 107 | 77 | 18 | 273 | 22 |
| | 21.5% | 15.5% | 3.6% | 54.9% | 4.4% |
| PENILE INJECTIONS | 178 | 82 | 63 | 158 | 14 |
| | 36.0% | 16.6% | 12.7% | 31.9% | 2.8% |
| PENILE IMPLANTS | 229 | 77 | 5 | 166 | 17 |
| | 46.4% | 15.6% | 1.0% | 33.6% | 3.4% |

WILLINGNESS TO TRY TREATMENT OPTIONS (GRAPH)



SATISFACTION WITH TREATMENTS

A significant majority of men are “Not at All” or “Not Very” satisfied with treatment options they have tried. Note that, despite the openness to *lifestyle changes* or *natural supplements* expressed previously, men are very dissatisfied with the results of these treatments.

| | # | TOTAL NEGATIVE | NOT AT ALL | NOT VERY | SOMEWHAT | VERY | TOTAL POSITIVE |
|--------------------------|-----|----------------|------------|----------|----------|-------|----------------|
| LIFESTYLE CHANGES | 188 | 155 | 95 | 60 | 30 | 3 | 33 |
| | | 82.4% | 50.5% | 31.9% | 16.0% | 1.6% | 17.6% |
| MEDICATION CHANGES | 98 | 76 | 49 | 27 | 20 | 2 | 22 |
| | | 77.6% | 50.0% | 27.6% | 20.4% | 2.0% | 22.4% |
| COUNSELING | 39 | 32 | 25 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| | | 82.1% | 64.1% | 17.9% | 17.9% | 0.0% | 17.9% |
| STRESS MEDICATION | 85 | 71 | 51 | 20 | 12 | 2 | 14 |
| | | 82.1% | 64.1% | 17.9% | 17.9% | 0.0% | 17.9% |
| ORAL DRUGS | 361 | 230 | 137 | 93 | 112 | 19 | 131 |
| | | 63.7% | 38.0% | 25.8% | 31.0% | 5.3% | 36.3% |
| NATUROPATHY, SUPPLEMENTS | 100 | 81 | 48 | 33 | 18 | 1 | 19 |
| | | 81.0% | 48.0% | 33.0% | 18.0% | 1.0% | 19.0% |
| VACUUM PUMP | 85 | 75 | 41 | 34 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| | | 88.2% | 48.2% | 40.0% | 11.8% | 0.0% | 11.8% |
| VIBRATOR / MASSAGER | 58 | 44 | 30 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| | | 75.9% | 51.7% | 24.1% | 24.1% | 0.0% | 24.1% |
| TESTOSTERONE THERAPY | 74 | 57 | 32 | 25 | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| | | 75.9% | 51.7% | 24.1% | 24.1% | 0.0% | 24.1% |
| PENILE SUPPOSITORIES | 18 | 16 | 11 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | | 75.9% | 51.7% | 24.1% | 24.1% | 0.0% | 24.1% |
| PENILE INJECTIONS | 63 | 42 | 32 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 21 |
| | | 66.7% | 50.8% | 15.9% | 15.9% | 17.5% | 33.3% |
| PENILE IMPLANTS* | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | | 60.0% | 20.0% | 40.0% | 0.0% | 40.0% | 40.0% |

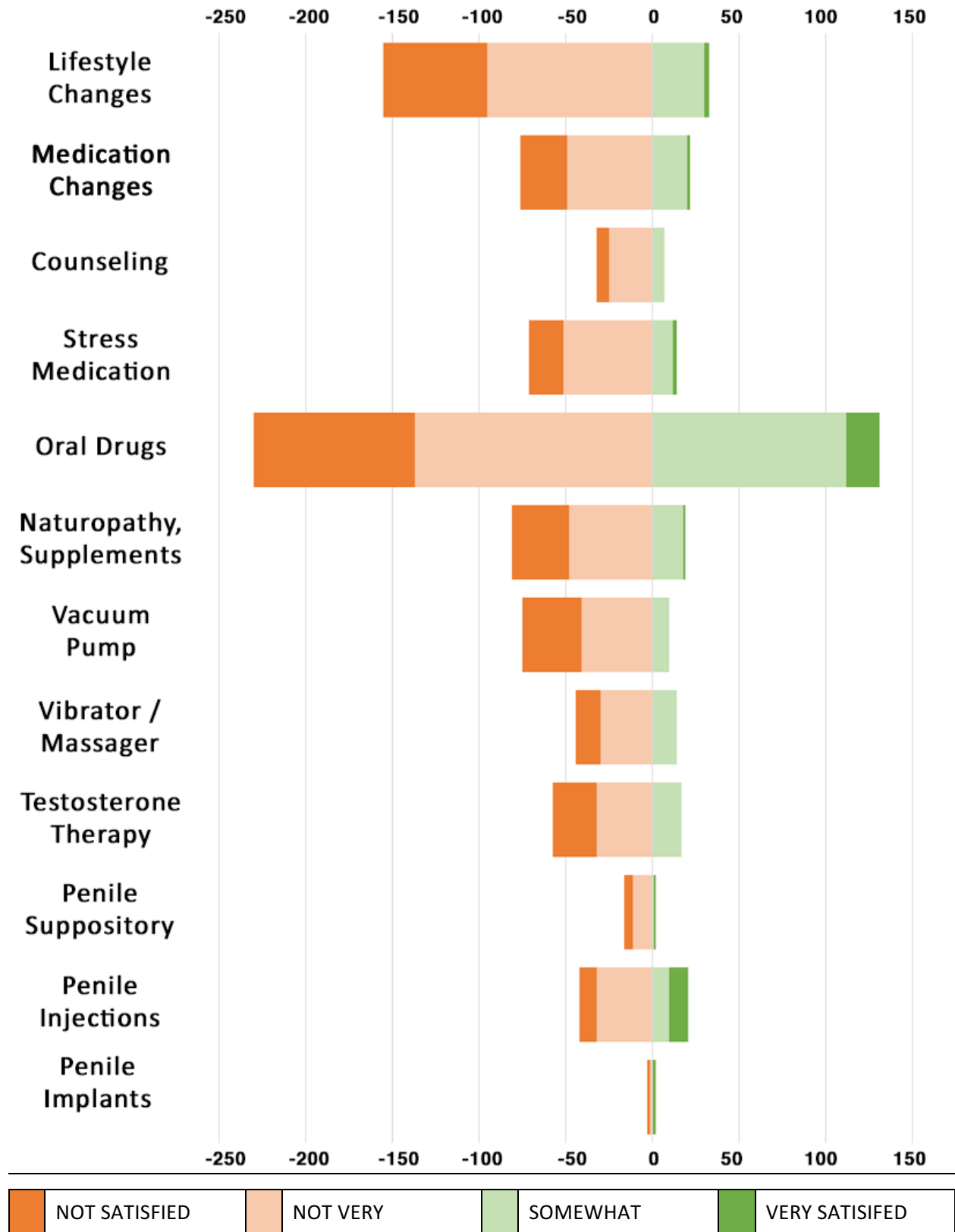
* It is important to note that the satisfaction rate shown for Penile Implants is not consistent with other research, most likely due to the very small number of responses (five) in this category.

More comprehensive studies^{5,6} have shown satisfaction rates for penile implants at over 79% and above.

⁵ Ji, Yoon Seob; Ko, Young Hwi; Song, Phil Hyun; Moon, Ki Hak. "Long-Term Survival and Patient Satisfaction with Inflatable Penile Prosthesis for the Treatment of Erectile Dysfunction." Korean Journal of Urology. Jun 2015; 56(6):461-465.
<<https://synapse.koreamed.org/DOIx.php?id=10.4111/kju.2015.56.6.461>>

⁶ Carvalheira, Ana; Santana, Rita; Pereira, Nuno M. "Why Are Men Satisfied or Dissatisfied with Penile Implants? A Mixed Method Study on Satisfaction with Penile Prosthesis Implantation." The Journal of Sexual Medicine. Dec 2015; 12(12):2474–2480.
<[http://www.jsm.jsexmed.org/article/S1743-6095\(16\)30020-0/fulltext](http://www.jsm.jsexmed.org/article/S1743-6095(16)30020-0/fulltext)>

SATISFACTION WITH TREATMENTS (GRAPH)



Personal Impact of Erectile Dysfunction

IMPACT ON PERSONAL MENTAL HEALTH

The impact of ED on men’s mental health is dramatic. Approximately 90% of the respondents indicate “Some Impact” or a “Major Impact” on their confidence, self-esteem and overall happiness.

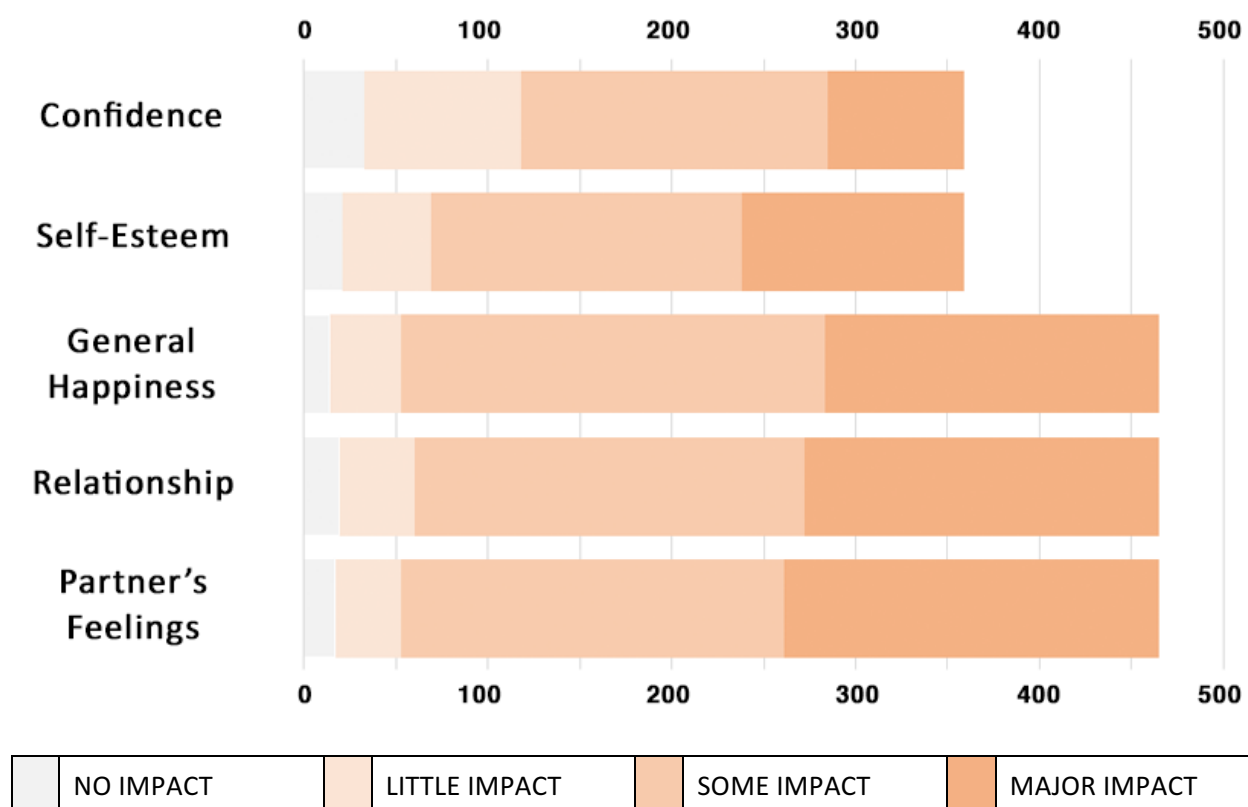
| | NO IMPACT | VERY LITTLE IMPACT | SOME IMPACT | MAJOR IMPACT |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| CONFIDENCE | 17 | 36 | 208 | 204 |
| | 3.7% | 7.7% | 44.7% | 43.9% |
| SELF-ESTEEM | 19 | 41 | 212 | 193 |
| | 4.1% | 8.8% | 45.6% | 41.5% |
| GENERAL HAPPINESS | 14 | 39 | 230 | 182 |
| | 3.0% | 8.4% | 49.5% | 39.1% |

IMPACT ON RELATIONSHIPS

Among men who are married or in a relationship, a significant majority of respondents also stated that ED had “Some Impact” or a “Major Impact” on their own feelings and on their partner’s feelings about their relationship.

| | NO IMPACT | VERY LITTLE IMPACT | SOME IMPACT | MAJOR IMPACT |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| FEELINGS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP | 21 | 48 | 169 | 121 |
| | 5.8% | 13.4% | 47.1% | 33.7% |
| PARTNER’S FEELINGS | 33 | 85 | 167 | 74 |
| | 9.2% | 23.7% | 46.5% | 20.6% |

IMPACT ON PERSONAL MENTAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIP (GRAPH)



COMMENTS REGARDING IMPACT

We have included a sample of the open-ended comments from men about the impact on their relationship; these quotes show the profound distress of many men suffering from ED.

- 1. My wife won't try anything other than "natural" sex, we tried injections and she didn't like it because it wasn't spontaneous. In the early days she told me not to start anything that I couldn't finish properly. She won't let me look into implants as they are not normal, been years with no sexual contact, bring on death, I have no life quality and my only joy is my children.*
- 2. My girl is very understanding, I had this condition when we met. But I do wish I could satisfy her.*
- 3. If feel inadequate and demoralized. I can't share my ultimate feeling of physical love for her. My desire is always there but I can't realize it.*
- 4. I've had no physical relationship for over 2 years. From 2010-2015 we tried twice for intercourse without success. I feel detached and empty.*

5. *Our intimacy is still there, however the loss of arousal on my part and low libido has caused less intimacy. Spontaneous sex is almost nil.*
6. *We have been married a little over two years. We were both unhappy when the meds did not work well. We both would like to have sexual relations but so far we have not had much luck. We have a good relationship but it could be better.*
7. *It's ruining our lovemaking as we're trying to have a baby.*
8. *Wife feels I unsatisfied as I can't get a hard erection and I feel I can't satisfy her as my penis goes down when penetrating.*
9. *It has cost me my self-respect, in doing that it has caused me to lose the feelings of closeness and desire for my lady. My feeling of being inadequate has severely damaged my relationship.*
10. *She thinks I'm not physically attracted to her thus our "sex life" is diminishing.*
11. *Frustration level is very high. I worry about her cheating.*
12. *It has been miserable. We go to church, I feel that has kept us going because this was a sudden and big letdown for both her and myself.*
13. *Makes me embarrassed which bothers her.*
14. *My wife and I could not have sex for 5 years. I had a dead penis. Nothing would work till I had the penile implant. Now it works 100% of the time. We do not have a lot of sex, but when we do it is beyond great.*
15. *Made me not want to initiate sex because scared of failing.*
16. *My partner has been patient for a while, she does like sex very much, but I find she's beginning to see me as a turn off, and don't like touching me sexually.*
17. *I have been belittled and shamed. I just have to accept it. I believe the ED has been caused by an operation to remove my gall bladder and I have a large stomach scar. It was badly infected which resulted in me being re-hospitalized.*
18. *My wife is still with me, but I feel she doesn't care if she gets any sex. It's been a while since we had sex can't get it up too much anymore.*
19. *Don't feel that closeness, drifting apart. Feel like I will be left alone.*

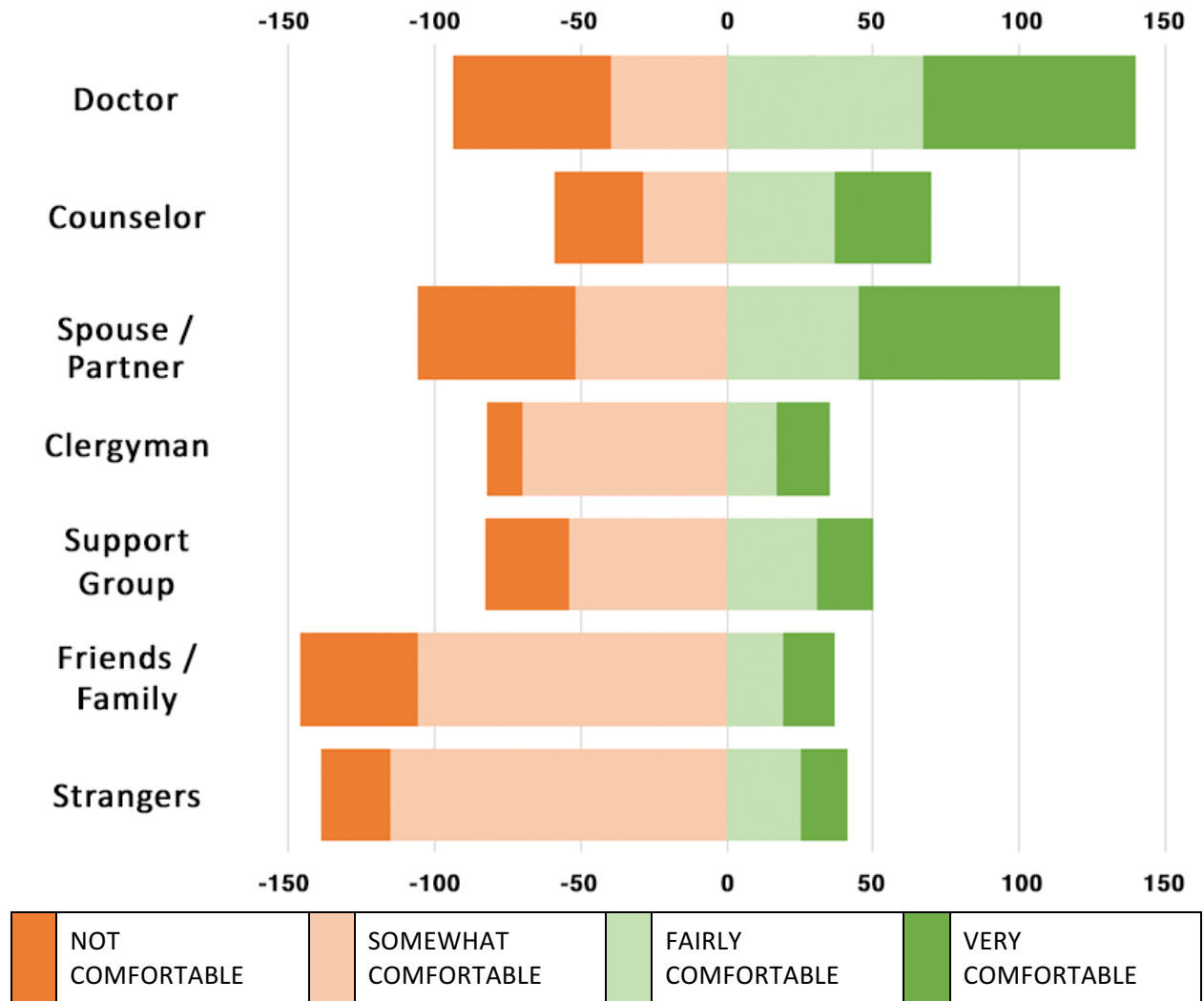
20. *It sucks. I am angry and embarrassed that I can't have a natural erection, and that I can't ejaculate. I am also on ADT for prostate cancer, so I have no sex drive. I am often angry and indifferent to my GF.*
21. *Don't feel like I'm a good husband because I can't have a relationship with my wife.*
22. *We, I in particular feel a lot of distance growing in our relationship. It appears to be crumbling and a lot of distrust is manifesting. Infidelity seems to be a big issue since I can't perform. I feel fairly certain our life together is over.*
23. *She is eight years younger and she need it very much and I can't give her all that she deserves and needs. I'm very surprised she still here with me.*
24. *It's got to a stage where she does not respond to me when I try to cuddle up to her she just sighs and goes to sleep.*
25. *Not loving relationship when have strong need, feel left out no desire to move in other ways.*
26. *Don't feel that closeness, drifting apart. Feel like I will be left alone.*

COMFORT TALKING ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

A significant number of men are not comfortable talking about their condition, even with their doctors, counselors, or spouses. This may lead to feelings of isolation, or, in a worst case, not seeking medical help because of embarrassment. (17.1% are “Not at All Comfortable” talking to their doctor about their condition.)

| | | TOTAL NEGATIVE | NOT AT ALL | NOT VERY | SOMEWHAT | VERY | TOTAL POSITIVE |
|------------------|------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|----------|-------|-------------------|
| DOCTOR | 234 | 94 | 40 | 54 | 67 | 73 | 140 |
| | | 40.2% | 17.1% | 23.1% | 28.6% | 31.2% | 59.8% |
| COUNSELOR | 129 | 59 | 29 | 30 | 37 | 33 | 70 |
| | | 45.7% | 22.5% | 23.3% | 28.7% | 25.6% | 54.3% |
| SPOUSE / PARTNER | 220 | 106 | 52 | 54 | 45 | 69 | 114 |
| | | 48.2% | 23.6% | 24.5% | 20.5% | 31.4% | 51.8% |
| CLERGYMAN | 117 | 82 | 70 | 12 | 17 | 18 | 35 |
| | | 70.1% | 59.8% | 10.3% | 14.5% | 15.4% | 29.9% |
| SUPPORT GROUP | 133 | 83 | 54 | 29 | 31 | 19 | 50 |
| | | 62.4% | 40.6% | 21.8% | 23.3% | 14.3% | 37.6% |
| FRIENDS / FAMILY | 183 | 146 | 106 | 40 | 19 | 18 | 37 |
| | | 79.8% | 57.9% | 21.9% | 10.4% | 9.8% | 20.2% |
| STRANGERS | 180 | 139 | 115 | 24 | 25 | 16 | 41 |
| | | 77.2% | 63.9% | 13.3% | 13.9% | 8.9% | 22.8% |
| TOTAL | 1196 | 709 | 466 | 243 | 241 | 246 | 847 |
| | | 59.3% | 39.0% | 20.3% | 20.2% | 20.6% | 40.7% |

COMFORT TALKING ABOUT ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION (GRAPH)



Conclusions

Erectile dysfunction is generally not taken seriously in our society. In fact, it is often the subject of jokes.

This study shows that ED has a profound negative impact on men's lives and relationships, including their confidence, self-esteem, and general happiness.

Because of feelings of embarrassment and shame, men are often uncomfortable talking about their condition, even with their partners, doctors, or counselors.

This may prevent men from getting the support and help they need, and contribute to feelings of isolation and depression.

The strong negative feelings experienced by men with ED may be due to their failure to find satisfactory treatment; this is certainly reflected in the open-ended comments. Men reported strong dissatisfaction with doctors and counselors, and with every treatment method tried⁷.

Men are more willing to try "natural" treatments for ED (lifestyle changes, naturopathy, herbal supplements) than more "invasive" approaches (vacuum pumps, penile injections, penile implants). However, among men who have tried the natural treatments, satisfaction rates were very low.

The highest satisfaction rate reported for all treatments was 36.3% (combined "Somewhat Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied") for oral medications such as Viagra, Cialis, and Levitra. This was also the most commonly used treatment, probably due to both extensive advertising, and prescriptions by doctors as a first line treatment. (Other studies have shown significantly higher satisfaction rates for penile implants.)

Our conclusion is that the real needs of men suffering from ED are not being met, often due to their own reticence to seek help.

There is an urgent need for:

- Outreach and education for men suffering from ED
- Greater availability of counseling and support
- More effective treatment options

⁷ As previously noted, the strong dissatisfaction with penile implants is not consistent with larger studies.

Rights and Credits

Copyright © 2018, ED Treatment Information Center.

This report is protected by US and international copyright.

The *data* contained in the report is not protected by copyright. If you include or reference this data in any publication, or in electronic form, we would appreciate the following citation:

INFORMAL

ED Treatment Information Center (EDtreatment.info)

FORMAL

Nicholson, Robert T. "Comprehensive Study on the Impact of Erectile Dysfunction." ED Treatment Information Center, 21 Mar. 2018, edtreatment.info/ed-impact-study/.

When publishing online, please include a link to:

<https://edtreatment.info/ed-impact-study/>

We will consider requests for our full survey response dataset from researchers wishing to conduct further analysis. Please send your requests to robert@robertnicholson.info using your institutional email address.