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AUTOEROTICISM, MENTAL HEALTH, AND ORGANIC DISTURBANCES IN PATIENTS WITH ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

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Introduction: Masturbation is a common, but often neglected, male sexual behavior.

Objectives and aims: To investigate the psychobiological correlates of self-reported masturbation in the last 3 months.

Methods: A consecutive series of 2,786 heterosexual male patients consulting an outpatient clinic for erectile dysfunction (ED) was studied. Several hormonal, biochemical and instrumental parameters were investigated. Patients were interviewed, prior to the beginning of any treatment, with Structured Interview on Erectile Dysfunction (SIEDY) and ANDROTEST structured interviews. They also completed the Middlesex Hospital Questionnaire.

Results: Among the patients studied, 1,781 (61.9%) reported they had masturbated at least once per month in the preceding 3 months. The frequency of masturbation was inversely related to age ($r = -0.329$; $P < 0.0001$) and directly associated with education level (adj $r = 0.052$, $P < 0.05$ after adjustment for age). A feeling of guilt during masturbation was reported by 274 (15.4%) patients. After adjusting for age, masturbation was positively associated with testosterone levels, stressful conditions, and both unstable and long-lasting couple relationship. Urogenital problems also increased the chance of masturbation. Reported guiltiness during autoeroticism was associated with psychological disturbances, low prolactin, low testosterone, and increased relational problems.

Conclusions: This study indicates that masturbation is a relatively frequent behavior in male subjects with ED. Inquiring about this sexual behavior is an important issue for understanding overall patients' sexual attitudes and behavior.