

Andropause: Ending of Fertile Life among Men

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Abstract: Andrology is a term used in medical science which clearly marks the closure of reproductive potentiality among men. In our society, reproduction is a natural biological process found among human beings which is of utmost priority. There is a belief that people who cannot perform their reproductive functions properly are looked down or forbidden in which men are also a part. The cases pertaining to infertility are seen in largest sense in today's life because the living style of people has undergone alteration with their socio-economic as well as family life; being most of the issues marital related i.e. having a baby within a year or so. Physicians dealing with the reproductive issues of men view that the process of reproduction is natural and cannot be hindered because people contribute new generation for the development of nation. In this connection, Andrology cannot be overlooked because men also have reproductive issues which should be diagnosed properly with adequate treatment. Medical sciences along with health experts have clearly mentioned that we cannot say when the reproductive processes among men will be stopped; it depends on their health condition; only thing that can be noticed here is men's infertility is a serious issue because men enjoy sexual and reproductive life until late adulthood. Men's reproduction ends in the last phase of old age i.e. eighty plus. Therefore, the paper tries to study about andropause among men during their life period and the effect of it on their health.

Keywords: andrology, sexual desire and reproductive capacity, masculinity, infertility, menopause

Date of Submission: 29-02-2020

Date of Acceptance: 14-03-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

We always speak about women and her fertility issues but men also undergo certain fertility problems. Normally, men won't accept that they are infertile instead they have certain reproductive issues to which they can sought treatment. This paper focuses on how men take andropause and face health challenges associated with it.

It is not like that men are infertile but have less or no sperm counts for which they seek for medical treatment to increase sperms for reproduction and sexual activity. Society does not accept or under value women and men if they are infertile. Further, fertility is most important concept among human beings, they gain value when they reproduce individuals to society.

Andrology studies about cessation of reproductive life among men. Few men are not aware of andrological problems but sometimes being aware also they feel shy to discuss it with the physicians if they really undergo certain symptoms of it.

Observable symptoms to be found among men

- a. No erectile penis
- b. Taking long duration to ejaculate
- c. No liquid to be found/less lubricant
- d. Less sexual drive

Women often look for another partner when they are not happy with their husbands/partner's sexual pleasure which is core concept of marital life. Women are less likely to fulfill sexual desires of men basically, but what if men are unable to fulfill women's sexual needs then it becomes question mark that's why sex and fertility are interconnected to each other when we speak about men and women's reproductive contribution to society. Therefore, men are cautious about their physique and do regular exercises to keep their health fit.

Fertility Priority among Men

Health is given such a primacy that being fertile is an important phase of life for men, irrespective of age groups. There are certain stereotypes among us which clearly gives us a picture that why fertility is given splendid place especially for men who is responsible for birth of a male child which enhances her family prestige and continuity of heirs; this culture has been followed from generations across times.

Right from ancient times to modern time's sex has undertaken its place where kingdom was ruled by males and family was headed by male kinship. In such a situation, there has always been pressure on women to give male child in order to continue family progeny. Woman failing to give male heirs to family either discarded or given mediocre place to her fertility but never her motherhood was praised, but male infertility is never questioned till today in any families across India. Male are always fertile in their reproductive activities until the age of 80's slowly they also enter into the phase of closure of reproductive activities in the last phase of oldest old.

What Happens to Male Identity- When They are Infertile

This is somewhat a thinking point that if men are infertile, their identity gets affected as they are looked down in the society along with their status and prestige so infertile is an aspect found among people suffering with such problems where such men shy/hide to share their problems because they know that this is somewhat embarrassing with which they are effected.

Speaking about some fertility things about men compared to women, they are more fertile until the age of 80 plus years. During late adult hood a man can be father of the child in his reproductive life than woman as menopause comes to her with the closure of menses. But for men, we can't say when their fertile life ends. Therefore, men holds a greater identity than women as they are sperm givers and make women's lives complete. Even though women bear's child for nine months in the womb, takes care of nurturance and rears the child, more relevance is given to male's reproductive role than women as the traditional gender stereotypical ideologies states that finally a child should be recognized on the identity of father whereas mother's identity remains unspoken.

Some Stereotypical Ideas: In Practice from Past to Present

- ❖ Male heirs is compulsory for each family in Indian society
- ❖ Woman is held responsible for birth of girl child
- ❖ If a man is infertile, woman is blamed as barren
- ❖ Infertility of man is kept hidden/not accepted

Certain Writings on Cessation of Male Infertility

There are some writings which speaks about closure of male infertility

Documentation, Cell, Health Service Studies (1993) "Symptoms of Andropause" reveals that men develop andropause as women have menopause. The biggest problem of andropause is psychological as it is central in sex at all ages. Worries, diseases, fatigue and pains distract from sex.

Sternbach (1998) states that men have no experience about andropause. They do not undergo a sudden drop in hormone production at midlife as women have. But we can see that the testosterone levels decrease slowly after age sixty in many men, the process which is called as andropause.

Rave and Khan (1998) observes that male menopause is much more gradual than women and its severity is wide. Henker et. al. (1981) says that men experience certain symptoms of menopause such as depression, anxiety, irritability, insomnia, fatigue, weakness, lower sexual drive, erectile failure, memory loss and reduce muscle bone mass and body hair. But it is not clear that there complaints are related to testosterone levels.

King (1996) states that men's psychological adjustments to the family problems results into stress and further having no sexual pleasure from the male partner to female spouse is due to some fertile problems related to men.

Biological capacities are required for men where they can begin family, those men who have contributed children more to society especially male children have more status and prestige. They build their own identity. Young men generally have good health and have more potentiality to reproduce than infertile men.

For men, changes in sexual activities takes place slowly in the later adulthood. If men are infertile then it will have impact on their occupational and psychological conditions. Men try to fulfill their reproductive needs with female partner/spouse. There is always increased desire for masculinity among men to be accept by men in all localities/communities. If a women is unable to conceive a child then there will be more talks but if it is fault of men then this issue is kept confidential within the family.

We observe that a father is more emotionally attached to child, in our traditional society father's identity is given to child but not mother's because a mother is only meant for giving sexual pleasure to father and reproducing a child. Further, we can also state that sperm has more value than egg as finally sperm is recognized in society in terms of child biological father whereas egg is partial. This is very shattering. Men do not experience sudden change in fertility as women do. But, men produce mature sperms throughout their lives.

Leilbum (1997), observes that among men the leading causes of infertility is low sperm count or the production of too many abnormal sperm cells. In fertility is not a discrete but long and confusing process.

Dunkel-Schetter and Lobel (1991), says that infertile men have grief and depression, sadness, disappointment, anxiety, guilt, disillusionment, and hopelessness which are certain observable psychological symptoms to be recognized. They also said that infertility bring radical changes to their career and family life.

Many infertile men sexual identity and gender role performance is questioned as traditional male gender role is giving motherhood status to women. It is because of men, women become mothers and enjoy motherhood. Olshansky (1987) said that if a man cannot become father then he can adopt a child, have a baby through surrogacy and artificial insemination after medical treatment or go for in vitro-fertilization to achieve a baby. Snarey (1988) said that infertile men chose to have involvement with other children to cope with infertility issues. The best way is adoption of a child where they can enjoy fatherhood and gain identity in society.

For men, changes in sexual functioning will take place slowly but for women when menopause occurs, they are unable to undertake reproductive activities.

Kotre and Hall (1990) said that men at the age of 40 years show little or no desires in sex as the response is very low but in their 50's we can see differences in their hormones undertaking sexual performance. The testosterone in the blood will be constant resulting in less response in sexual activity. We can see that middle aged men can control ejaculation than early adulthood. Most men, remain fertile throughout their life phase. There are certain biological changes which leads to certain psychological changes and sexual potentialities and masculine identity where some men enjoy active sex life for many years.

Although many men continue to enjoy sexual life we can see changes in their biological functioning as they age. During middle adulthood, some associate with certain problems such as:

- Hypertension
- Heart issues
- Chronic sinusitis
- Diabetes
- Arthritis
- Hearing problems

Impact of Male Infertility: What can happen?

As discussed above regarding male infertility, carries impact on socio-economic, personal and family life. Highest impact is absence of fatherhood. However, there are certain medical treatments for men to overcome infertility issues but till then there occurs marital instability among partners. Some of them also comprise of frequent tensions in family, absence of good marital life, going for medical treatment, psychological issues such as sad, anxiety, depression, guilt, etc. There is also lack of concentration in work place and final outcome, if a man is unable to become fertile remain childless for a lifetime.

II. CONCLUSION

We can conclude this paper by focusing more on gender stereotypical ideology on which society functions where men are not labeled as infertile like women. Andrology is a biological study in science where physicians deals with the issue of males incapability for reproduction but medical science has made so much discoveries where nothing is impossible for science to achieve. This is a short paper to bring out an idea that even men have certain difficulties in sexual and reproductive life but in larger sense, we blame women for not giving child. Most of us, deny the concept of male infertility because it is found very less in society. A man can have a child after effective medical treatment but may face certain side effects. Andrology is a sensitive topic where males undergoing this problem feel uncomfortable to share it with physician. It can be solved in later phase and man can enjoy fatherhood phase.

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Dr. Neeta Biradar. "Andropause: Ending of Fertile Life among Men." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 25(3), 2020, pp. 01-04.