

Sexual Dysfunction and its Treatment through Herbal Aphrodisiacs

Alok Semwal^{1*}, Ramandeep Singh¹, Mohammad Azam²

¹Department of Pharmacy, Himachal Institute of Pharmacy, Paonta Sahib-173025, H.P, INDIA.

²Department of Jaharat (Surgery), AKTCH, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, INDIA.

Dear Editor,

The main essence of marriage in humans is proliferation and sexual fulfillment of male with a female in sexual intercourse. Apart from non living matter, all living things reproduce to make more organisms like themselves. Not only the male and female reproductive organs are essential for reproduction but also for a normal sexual intercourse the factors relating to the erection of the copulatory organ must function normally. The repeated inability of the male or female to perform this function, is termed as sexual dysfunction (SD).^[1] Sexual dysfunction in male can be a result of physical or psychological disorder. Male sexual problems include decreased desire, orgasm disorder, erectile dysfunction, ejaculatory disorder and Detumescence failure.

The remedies for male sexual dysfunction in modern medicine are limited. Allopathic drugs such as Sildenafil citrate, Tadalafil citrate, Vardenafil, Avanafil, Alprostadil, and Papaverin have been developed for the management of erectile dysfunction, but produce side effects like sudden hypotension, hypersensitivity reaction, abnormal vision, infertility, suicidal tendencies and mental disorders which limit their utility.^[2]

Ayurveda realized the problem of male sexual dysfunction thousands of years ago and developed a separate field of therapeutics known as 'Vajikaran', meaning enhancement of sexual performance. Several medicinal plants have always been available and used to treat many ailments including impotence.^[3]

Sexual stimulants are often called "aphrodisiacs". The term "aphrodisiacs" is derived from Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty, pleasure and procreation. Aphrodisiacs are the agents which are used extensively by the human beings seeking to improve their sexual life and help in erectile dysfunctions (ED).^[3] Aphrodisiacs can be characterized according to their mode of actions; (i). Those that increase libido (i.e. sexual desire), (ii). Those that increase potency (i.e. effectiveness of erection), and (iii). Those that increase sexual pleasure.^[4]

According to recent scientific literature *Aloe vera*, *Arachishypogaea* Linn., *Asphaltum bitumen*, *Bacopamonnieri* L. *Boerhaviadiffusa* L. *Citrullus colocythis*, *Cocosnucifera* Linn., *Crocussativus* Linn., *Curculigo orchioides* Gaertn., *Daucuscarota* L., *Ficus retusa* L., *Glycyrrhiza glabra* Linn., *Zingiber officinale* Roscoe and several other medicinal plants have been identified or evaluated for their aphrodisiac potential.^[3,5,6]

Besides the fact that several plant sources are beneficial as an immune modulator, sex stimulant and also as medication in erectile dysfunctions, there is very low range of research work carried out in this field.

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