Book review

Heart disease and erectile dysfunction

edited by R.A. Kloner. Humana Press, Totowa, New Jersey. 2004. 300 pages. £89.50. ISBN: 1-58829-216-9

This book consists of 18 chapters condensed into 280 pages containing much useful information for the physician managing patients with erectile dysfunction (ED). Each chapter has been written by a recognized world expert, all of whom possesses a wealth of knowledge regarding the subject area and have written extensively on the subject. After many years of controversy, ED is now recognized as a predominantly organic problem, commonly related to significant underlying disease, and over 80% of men can be successfully treated.

Despite this, many men are not offered treatment. There are many reasons for this, which include embarrassment, uncertainty about how to ask the right questions, lack of time, perceptions about the effect of age, gender and culture of the patient. There is a belief that patients will initiate the discussion. The facts are that many men will wait years before plucking up enough courage to attend a doctor's surgery or clinic to discuss sex. Fear surrounding the safety of resuming or initiating sexual activity can, in some instances, play a large part in the development of sexual dysfunction. For patients to resume normal sexual activity, it is vital that their doctor or nurse is confident and able to reassure them that the risks involved are minimal.

This book is a very useful addition to the increasing educational material available on the topic of ED. It concentrates on the relationship between vascular diseases and ED and particularly coronary artery disease. Many myths still abound regarding 'sex and the heart' and this book goes a long way towards dispelling many of them.

The initial chapters review the physiology of erection

and the many physical causes, and provides an overview of the size of the problem. The psychological aspects of ED in cardiac patients are covered comprehensively. Management of ED is covered in detail and is followed by seven chapters on various aspects of therapy with phosphodiesterase type 5 inhibitors and their role in therapy with the focus particularly on cardiovascular safety.

The final chapters review the physiological cost of sexual activity and sexual activity as a trigger of myocardial infarction or ischaemia. There is much useful advice for patients who wish to have sex after cardiac events and procedures. The book concludes with a review of the American College of Cardiology and The American Heart Association Guidelines on the use of sildenafil in patients with cardiovascular disease and the risk of heart attack after sexual activity. The Princeton Guidelines and the rationale for the management of sexual dysfunction in cardiac patients is also described.

This book will help encourage more doctors and nurses, both in primary and secondary care to overcome their inhibitions and take a more active role in the management of ED, particularly in patients who have either vascular or cardiovascular disease. This is important, as vascular disease is of course, the most common cause of erectile dysfunction.

This book should be on the shelf of any doctor or nurse seeking to treat men with erection problems. It provides an up-to-date guide and state-of-the-art knowledge about the causes, the treatment and the follow up of men with ED, in a practical and accessible format.

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