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Drug Abuse Impairs Sexual Performance in Men Even After Rehabilitation

Jan. 17, 2013 — A new article reveals that alcohol is the drug that most affects sexual arousal (erectile capacity). In addition, the researchers observed that men did not improve their sexual performance when they stopped drinking alcohol. The study included 905 men of which 550 had been diagnosed with alcohol, cocaine, cocaine and alcohol, heroin, marijuana and speedball (cocaine and heroin) addiction.

Researchers at the University of Granada, Spain, and Santo Tomas University in Colombia have found that drug abuse negatively affects sexual performance in men even after years of abstinence. This finding contradicts other studies reporting that men spontaneously recovered their normal sexual performance at three weeks after quitting substance abuse.

The results of this study have been published in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, the official journal of the International Society for Sexual Medicine. The authors of this paper are Pablo Vallejo Medina -a professor at Santo Tomas University, Colombia- and Juan Carlos Sierra, a professor at the University of Granada.

In this study, the researchers assessed the sexual performance of 605 men, of which 550 had been diagnosed with alcohol, cocaine, cocaine and alcohol, heroin, marihuana and speedball (cocaine and heroin) addiction. The remaining 356 men were included as controls.

Assessing Four Areas

The researchers examined and evaluated four areas of sexual performance: sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, sexual arousal and orgasm. The study revealed that the study group had a moderately to significantly impaired sexual performance as compared to controls.

Additionally, the researchers separately examined the effects of the different substances on sexuality. For instance, speedball and cocaine abuse most frequently affect sexual pleasure, while they slightly affect sexual desire.

Cocaine users have very high sexual desire during peak periods of drug abuse.

Alcohol is the drug which most affects sexual arousal (erectile capacity). This is the first study to reveal the permanent effect of substance abuse on sexuality, even after long abstinence periods. Finally, orgasms are prevalingly impaired by heroin, cocaine, alcohol and speedball.

This study was conducted thanks to the collaboration of several Spanish rehabilitation institutions: the Asociación Ciudadana de Lucha contra la Droga (A Coruña), Centro de Atención a las Drogodependencias de Arganzuela (Madrid), Centro de Atención a las Drogodependencias de San Blas (Madrid), Institut de Neuropsiquiatria i Addiccions del Parc de Salut Mar-Hospital del Mar (Barcelona), Fundación Noray-Proyecto Hombre Alicante (Alicante), Unidad Municipal de Atención a Drogodependientes (Santiago de Compostela), Proxecto Home Galicia (Galicia), Proyecto Hombre Granada (Granada), y el "Cortijo Buenos Aires" (Granada).

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1. Pablo Vallejo-Medina, Juan Carlos Sierra. **Effect of Drug Use and Influence of Abstinence on Sexual Functioning in a Spanish Male Drug-Dependent Sample: A Multisite Study**. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 2012; DOI: [10.1111/j.1743-6109.2012.02977.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-6109.2012.02977.x)

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