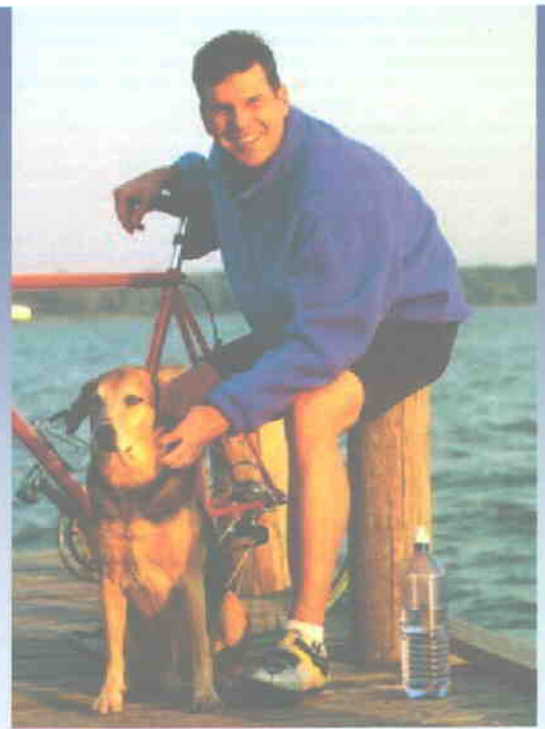


# “Andropause”

*Male Menopause*



by Bill Spear, R.Ph.,CCN

While most media attention is centered on women and menopause, men are also affected by changes in their body chemistry and hormones. Combined with the effect of non-managed aging and stress, men are vulnerable to significant decreases in memory, physical performance and energy. Men, if you are wondering why you don't have the stamina you once had, there is a simple explanation for this—Andropause, estimated to affect more than 25 million men between the ages of 40 and 55 in the United States and approximately 408 million men world wide.

Andropause or “Male Menopause” occurs when a man's production of hormones decline below the normal level. Numerous changes are associated with the age-related decline in the hormone testosterone, which is classified as an androgen. Some men may go through a rather sudden change in testosterone levels that may correlate with the hormonal changes that women experience at menopause. However, most men have a slower and more subtle hormonal decline and develop symptoms over a period of time.

The negative symptoms sometimes associated with andropause may include: decrease in testosterone levels, reduced libido, erectile dysfunction,

weakness, fatigue, disturbed sleep, osteoporosis, heart disease, atherosclerosis, irritability, insomnia, slow wound healing, prostate problems, low sperm counts, depression, anxiety, reduced muscle mass, memory impairment, impaired blood cell formation and reduced cognitive function.

For andropausal men, the first step to begin restoring strength, vitality and quality of life is to check hormone levels. Checking hormone levels can be done through a laboratory blood test or an in-home saliva test kit, a non-invasive and simple method. The saliva measures the amount of “free or active” hormones present in your body.

Although supplementation of the hormone testosterone has been shown to relieve the symptoms of andropause, other hormones including DHEA may also play a role in a men's hormone replacement plan.

Not all men are the same. Different men may need replacement through pharmaceutical compounding. A trained compounding pharmacist in men's health issues can develop a dosage form that works best for each individual. With a physician's consent, a compounding pharmacist can prepare these medications as topical preparations including creams which are applied directly to the skin. Topi-

cal preparations allow the drug to be absorbed through the skin and enter the bloodstream, bypassing the gastrointestinal tract and potentially minimizing the related side effects. Some medications also may be formulated in dosage forms such as flavored troches (lozenges), which dissolve in the mouth and quickly enter the blood stream.

Once a man's hormones are replaced or restored to physiologic levels considered normal for younger males, men may experience a dramatic reversal of many changes resulting in more strength, stamina, and an overall healthier balance of life.

A compounding pharmacist, trained in men's health, can work together with your physician to compare the benefits and risks of all possible therapies and choose the ideal replacement plan for your proper hormone balance. Depending on your individual requirements a compounding pharmacist can customize a hormone formula especially for you.

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