

DR. CHARLES METZGER'S SATURDAY EVENING NEWSLETTER

MARCH 9, 2024

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“More Data Show Erectile Dysfunction Meds May Affect Alzheimer’s Risk”.

MD Edge Neurology FEB 8, 2024 By Kelli Whitlock Burton

<https://www.mdedge.com/neurology/article/267742/alzheimers-cognition/more-data-show-erectile-dysfunction-meds-may-affect/page/0/1?ecd=WNL EVE 240209 mdedge&icd=login success email match norm>

Good evening.

I wanted to share a study that correlates lower Alzheimer’s Disease risk in men with specific risk factors with the use of Viagra or Cialis. The connection between these drugs and Alzheimer’s is particularly interesting to P Ca patients as many of you are using them for ED and / or controlling urinary incontinence. Thus the question: are there unintended benefits to using these meds and if so, what dosages are needed to obtain benefits in men and maybe women with an increased risk of Alzheimer’s? Of three studies of the instance of Alzheimer’s risk and ED medication use, two point to possible benefits in some risk groups and one says ED meds offer no benefits.

Two new and controversial studies suggest that Cialis and Viagra may prevent Alzheimer’s Disease (AD). In a study reported by Ruth Brauer, Ph. D. of the University College, London, some 269,725 men were recently diagnosed with Erectile Dysfunction (ED) with an average age of 59 years were followed for about 5 years. About half of these men got a script for either Viagra or Cialis. Additional AD risk factors in these subjects were noted including smoking, alcohol use, body mass index, hypertension diabetes, depression, anxiety and concomitant medication use.

The participants did not have AD at the beginning of this study. But, as the study progressed 749 were diagnosed with AD. Some of these subjects had a script for an ED drug and some did not. By the end of the 5 year study, the research showed that those taking an ED drug had an 18% lower risk of AD than the group who did not take Viagra or Cialis. Men 70 years and older and men with a history of high blood pressure of diabetes did better than the medicated class as a whole. Finally there was no association with AD risk in men who got fewer than 20 prescriptions. The takeaway here is Viagra and Cialis may prevent AD in men more at risk for AD if they are 70 years or older, have high blood pressure, and / or who have diabetes but more and better controlled studies are needed.

This study is interesting but is short of providing patients and doctors with a clear path going forward so don’t use ED drugs to prevent or treat AD. This study didn’t control for the amount of ED drug taken and / or the amount of patient physical activity (exercise offers protective benefits against AD and may help ED). Ozama Ismail, Ph. D. of the Alzheimer’s Foundation criticized the study’s ability to detect AD absent imaging biomarkers and autopsy findings.

Dr. Brauer suggested more research with patients with mild cognitive impairment and measure the effects of ED drugs given in predefined doses with acetylcholinesterase inhibitors and with or without placebo.

So, I will watch for new studies and see where they lead and pass along the information to you. Meanwhile, continue to take Viagra or Cialis for its on label purpose.

And, enjoy the rest of your weekend,

Warmly,

CKM