**Erectile Dysfunction Common in Men with Gout**

Men with gout are likely to have erectile dysfunction (ED), according to American researchers.

The team from the Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey presented their findings at the European League Against Rheumatism Annual Congress, held earlier this summer in Paris.

Gout is an especially painful type of arthritis that is caused by excessive amounts of uric acid in the body. Uric acid is a waste product formed when the body breaks down compounds called purines, which are found in many foods, such as meat and seafood.

Normally, uric acid is filtered by the kidneys and exits the body with urine. But when uric acid builds up, it can form needle-like crystals in the joints. Symptoms of gout include pain, swelling, and redness. Many cases of gout occur in the big toe, but it can also happen in other areas, like the ankles, knees, fingers, and elbows.

Gout is more common in men than in women.

In the study, the researchers surveyed 201 men between the ages of 18 and 89. Eighty-three of the men had gout. About three quarters of the men with gout also had erectile dysfunction, compared to 52% of the men without gout.

Also, 43% of the men with gout had severe ED compared to 30% of the men who didn’t have gout.

Men with gout should be screened for ED, the researchers said.

In a press release, lead author Dr. Naomi Schlesinger said, “These results strongly support the proposal to screen all men with gout for the presence of ED. Increasing awareness of the presence of ED in gout patients should in turn lead to earlier medical attention and treatment for this distressing condition.”

She added that both gout and ED are associated with heart disease and coronary artery disease, so patients should be checked for these conditions as well.
In January, The Journal of Sexual Medicine published a study by a different group of researchers who reported higher ED risk among men with coronary artery disease and elevated levels of uric acid. (More details are available here.)

In that study, the researchers suggested that uric acid can cause problems with endothelial cells in the penis, which form the inner lining. Uric acid might also play a role in microvascular disease, which affects smaller blood vessels, they said.

Each of these conditions can interfere with blood flow to the penis, which is critical for a firm erection.

Resources

American College of Rheumatology

Schumacher, H. Ralph, MD

“Gout”

(Updated: September 2012)

https://www.rheumatology.org/practice/clinical/patients/diseases_and_conditions/gout/

European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR)

“All Men with Gout Should Be Routinely Screened for Erectile Dysfunction”

(Press release. June 12, 2014)

http://www.eular.org/congresspressreleases/All_men_with_gout_should_be_routinely_screened_for_erectic_dysfunction--OP0135.pdf

Schlesinger, Naomi, MD, et al.

“Erectile Dysfunction is Common Among Gout Patients”

(Abstract OP0135 presented at EULAR Annual Congress. June 12, 2014)

The Journal of Sexual Medicine

Solak, Yalcin, MD, et al.

“Uric Acid Level and Erectile Dysfunction in Patients with Coronary Artery Disease”

(Full-text. First published online: September 25, 2013. Print: January 2014)


Medscape Medical News

Goodman, Alice

“Gout Patients Should Be Screened for Erectile Dysfunction”

(June 15, 2014)


National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

National Institutes of Health

“What is Gout?”

(July 2010)


Sexual Medicine Society of North America

“Link Between ED and Uric Acid for CAD Patients”