

See testosterone for all it is - not just a male sex hormone

Editor - Thank you to Carolyn Zinko for her story about Jed Diamond's description of irritable male syndrome ("Grumpy not-so-old men," Monday).

Andropause (testosterone decline with symptoms) is more widespread than the public (and many physicians) realize. According to the New England Journal of Medicine (Rhoden, January 2004), low testosterone occurs among about 9 percent of men in their 40s, 30 percent of men in their 50s, 42 percent of men in their 60s and 70 percent of men in their 70s. Three larger studies published in peer-reviewed medical journals during the past two years have shown that men with low testosterone do not live as long as those with normal levels. The largest of those studies (EPIC, Great Britain) enrolled more than 11,000 men.

While Diamond's research has focused mainly on the psychological aspects of andropause, there are several physical sequelae as well: osteoporosis (associated risk of bone fracture); prediabetes and diabetes; increased body fat (especially around the midsection, the so-called beer belly that is linked with heart disease); abnormal lipids (blood fat); increased atherosclerosis (decreased circulation); and earlier heart attacks.

It is time for men (and their spouses, partners and physicians) to become aware that testosterone in men is not just a sex hormone but a total body hormone, essential for normal psychological and physical functioning and to help offset risks for chronic life-threatening diseases.

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Editor - Thanks for Carlyne Zinko's well-written piece. Not because I have any of those symptoms but because I don't. None. (Confirmed by my wife.)

The reason I'm grateful is because my only vice is to enjoy a good, strong alcoholic drink at the end of the day. Recently, as I was making my usual manhattan (sometimes a martini), my wife took her usual shot: "Must you have a drink every night?" I had your article at the ready. I showed it to her and asked, "Do you recognize a single one of these symptoms in me?"

She looked it over, concurred to my rhetorical query, smiled and dummied up! Thank you!

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