

Men's other best friend

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MANILA, Philippines – If you've been diagnosed with an enlarged prostate (known medically as benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH), you'll surely want to fight it with every weapon available.

After all, who would want to experience difficulty in urinating, get up several times during the night to urinate, or have that constant feeling of a full bladder even if you have just urinated?

"It's a really difficult experience in a man's life especially with the fact that BPH is most likely to occur in 50 percent of men when they reach age 50 and over (the chance increases to over 80 percent as one passes the age of 80)," lamented Dr. Samuel Yrastorza, a urologist.

BPH is a condition that occurs when the prostate enlarges. This small organ, found below the bladder (where urine is stored), surrounds the urethra, the tube that drains urine from the bladder out of the body.

Tennis ball

"Normally the size of a ping pong ball, the prostate gland may become as large as a tennis ball. When this happens, it squeezes the urethra, impeding the urine's flow," explained Yrastorza.

Treatments options include medications and surgery.

“Surgery is reserved for those who can no longer empty their bladder completely, suffers from body-wide infection that begins in the bladder, as well as those whose kidney is already in danger of being damaged,” the doctor explained.

While there are effective medicines—those that relax the smooth muscle of the prostate and bladder neck (alpha-adrenergic antagonists) in order to allow urine to flow more easily; and those that inhibit the production of dihydrotestosterone from testosterone (alpha-reductase inhibitors), side effect could be most unwanted.

“The first group of drugs lowers the blood pressure to the point that the patient suffers from dizziness as well as light-headedness. These drugs also reacts negatively to medications for erectile dysfunction. The second group, while very effective in treating BPH, decreases sex drive or causes ejaculatory or erectile dysfunction,” Yrastorza explained.

He said that in his search for improving the quality of life of his male patients, he came across with another treatment option.

“Right now, I am also looking at the effect of saw palmetto. Commonly used in Europe for the treatment of BPH, it acts similarly to alpha-reductase inhibitors but without the effect of decreasing one’s sexual function,” Yrastorza said.

Giving capsules of Sunburst Saw Palmetto (160 mg soft gelatin capsules containing standardized extract of the plant), Yrastorza reported positive results.

Improvements

“In my case, I saw improvements in my patients in just one week to two weeks after taking the saw palmetto. With the drug, a lot of my patients had to wait five to six months to experience similar results,” the doctor noted.

Another factor the doctor considered is the fact that Sunburst Saw Palmetto is four times more affordable than its drug counterpart.

“In my practice, I had to confront the fact that a huge percentage of my patients have no financial capability to buy the prescribed drug. Most of them, after learning how much they would spend for the drug, had no other choice but to live with their condition unmanaged. With this alternative—and effective—remedy, I now have the means to improve their life,” the doctor said.

The most notable side effect he observed from his patients taking saw palmetto was upset stomach and headache.

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