

# Let's talk about sexual dysfunction a diabetes complication

Radha Sharma, TNN 10 November 2009, 06:11am IST

AHMEDABAD: Sexual dysfunction is a known complication of diabetes not just in men but women too, say experts. In fact, a recent study of diabetics revealed that 7.3 per cent men with diabetes had erectile dysfunction. But, doctors say this is common in women as well.

Only, women mostly shy away from acknowledging sexual complications of diabetes like dryness of vagina, reduced libido or infections in private parts.

"The study involved 427 men and 282 women but it was only male candidates who complained of sexual dysfunction. In fact, a number of men got diagnosed with diabetes after they consulted their doctors as they were suffering from erectile dysfunction or other associated sexual problems," said Dr Mayur Patel who has recently done his doctoral thesis on the scenario of diabetes in India surveying 709 patients.

"Women also suffer from reduced sexual drive or vaginal dryness but tend to shy away from reporting the same," says Dr Patel. Awareness about these complications is so little in women that they often tend to consult gynaecologists for recurrent infections of urinary tract or genital organs. "Many women get diagnosed with high levels of diabetes when their gynaecologists advise blood sugar tests," says Dr Patel.

Like 44-year old Pratibha Pandya who was suffering from recurrent genital infections. When the infections did not easily respond to medication, her gynaecologist ordered a diabetes test which revealed she had been suffering high levels of sugar above 500 mg per centage which had probably gone undiagnosed for years.

Dr Patel said that the complication of sexual dysfunction was stated by all men and not a single women.

Since men have a more active role, they acknowledge it early. "Diabetes affects sexual function by compromising blood supply to the penis. Neuropathy is a known complication of diabetes where patients feel less sensation which tends to extend to the sexual organs as well," said Dr Patel.

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