

Premature ejaculation hits one in three S'pore men

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By Cheryl Lim

AS MANY as one in three men in Singapore could be suffering from premature ejaculation (PE), according to a study.

PE, a devastating condition for a man, is defined as a lack of control on a man's part during intercourse, resulting in ejaculation prior to or within one minute of penetration, said Associate Professor George Lee Eng Geap from the University of Malaya and Monash University.

Although the poll did not include Singapore, Prof Lee, who is part of the study's steering committee, said: "We believe the results to be applicable to Singapore, because a similar study done in Europe in 2007 also showed a similar result. PE is a problem that cuts across ethnicity and age groups."

The Asia-Pacific Premature Ejaculation Prevalence And Attitude Study surveyed nearly 5,000 men, aged 18 to 65, from 10 Asia-Pacific countries, including China, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, South Korea and Malaysia.

The causes of the problem are complex, ranging from the psychological to the physiological, said Prof Lee. A person who secretly had intercourse at home, and was anxious of being found out by his parents, for instance, could develop PE later in life, he said.

The problem could also be genetic in nature, he added.

There may be a solution: American company Janssen-Cilag has recently submitted its medication, Dapoxetine, to the health authorities here for review.

The pill is the only known medication that can treat the condition and is currently available in seven European Union countries, including Sweden, Austria and Italy. Outside of Europe, the medicine is available only in New Zealand and South Korea.

Dapoxetine is supposed to boost the ejaculation-delaying hormone serotonin, by preventing or delaying the breakdown of serotonin in the body. In effect, this would help maintain higher levels of the hormone in the body, which would in turn help to delay ejaculation.

Other treatments for PE include behavioural therapy like counselling, or topical treatments like sprays, numbing gels or condoms. However, there are drawbacks to some of these treatments. For example, numbing gel or sprays can desensitise the penis, causing a loss of sexual enjoyment, said Prof Lee.

The condition can seriously injure a man's relationship with his partner. "PE can have a devastating impact on the relationship between men and their partners," said Prof Lee.

"The impact extends not just to a man's self-esteem, but also to a woman's fulfillment and, ultimately, to the entire relationship."

<http://health.asiaone.com/Health/News/Story/A1Story20091215-185879.html>