

Men's Sexual Health

JOHN SCHWEICHLER, MS, LMFT

About Me

John Schweichler, MS, LMFT

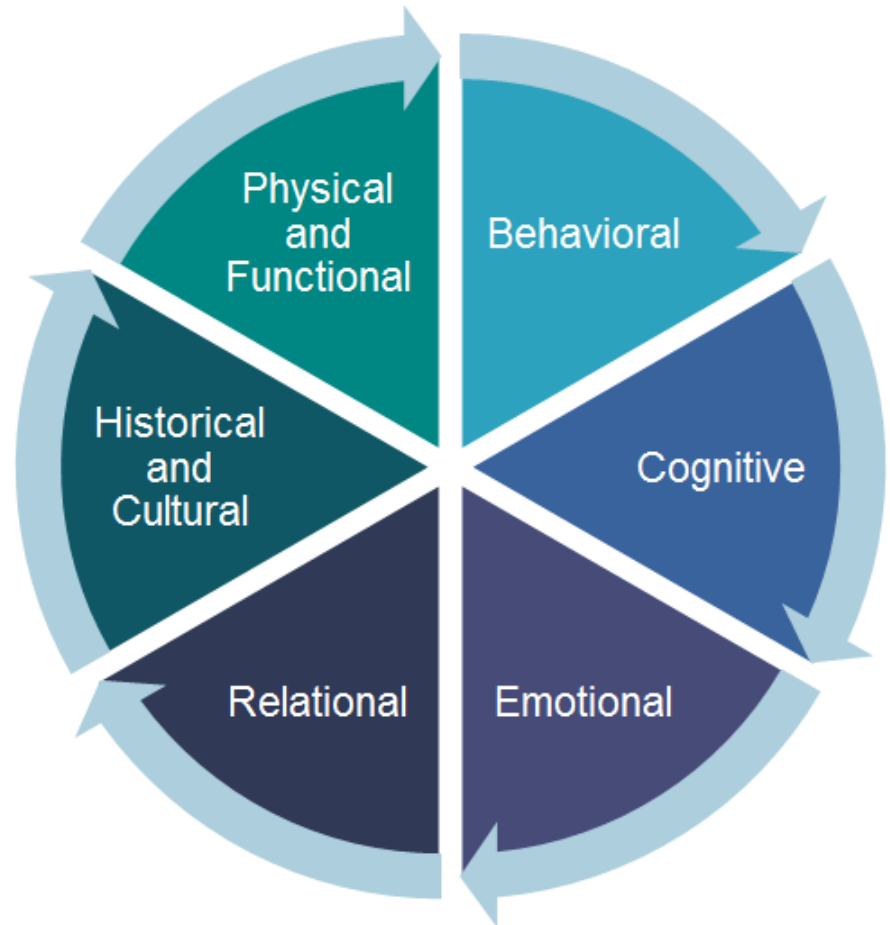
- Trained and Licensed as Marriage and Family Therapist
- Specialty in Medical Family Therapy
- Work as a Medical Family Therapist with Duke Cancer Patient Support Program
 - Genitourinary and Hematological Malignancies
- Facilitate one of our Prostate Cancer Support Groups

No conflicts of interest to report

Sex is Complex!

“Sexual response has a requisite biological underpinning, yet is usually experienced in an intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cultural context. Thus, sexual function involves a complex interaction among biological, sociocultural, and psychological factors”

DSM-5 pg. 423



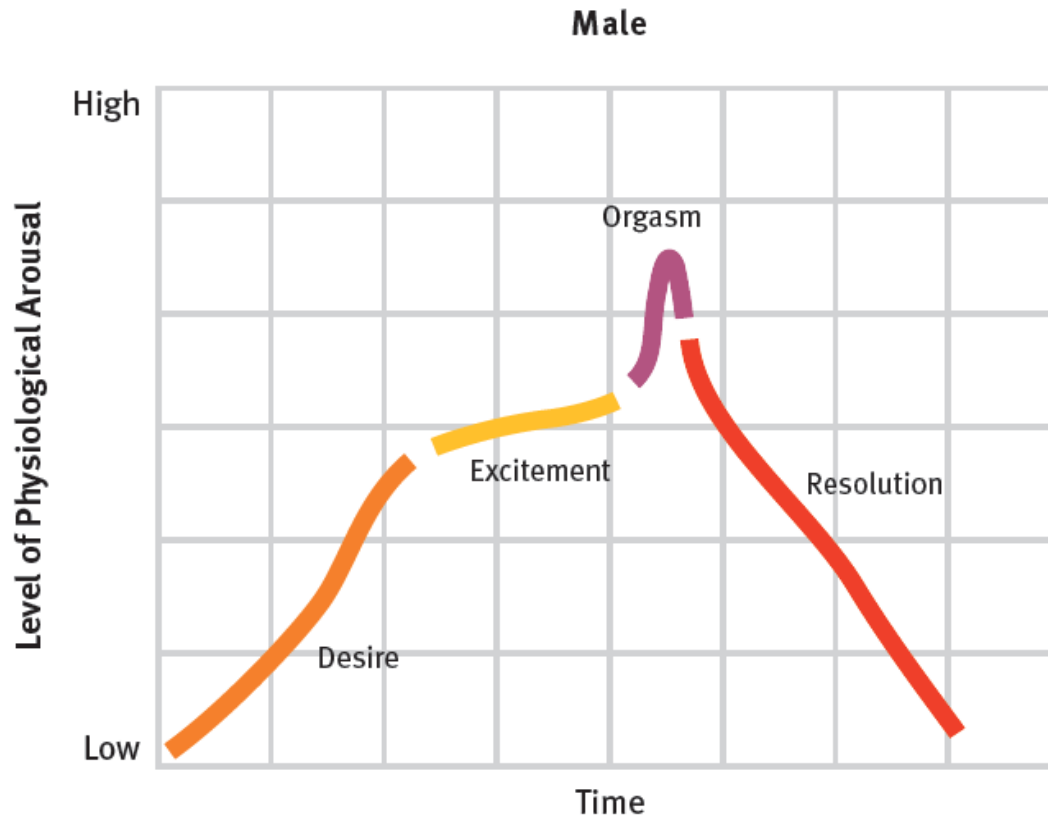
Human Sexual Response Cycle

The human sexual response can be described as a cycle with four phases:

- Desire
- Excitement
- Orgasm
- Resolution

Oncology patients can experience sexual function difficulties in one or more of the phases

Male Sexual Response Cycle

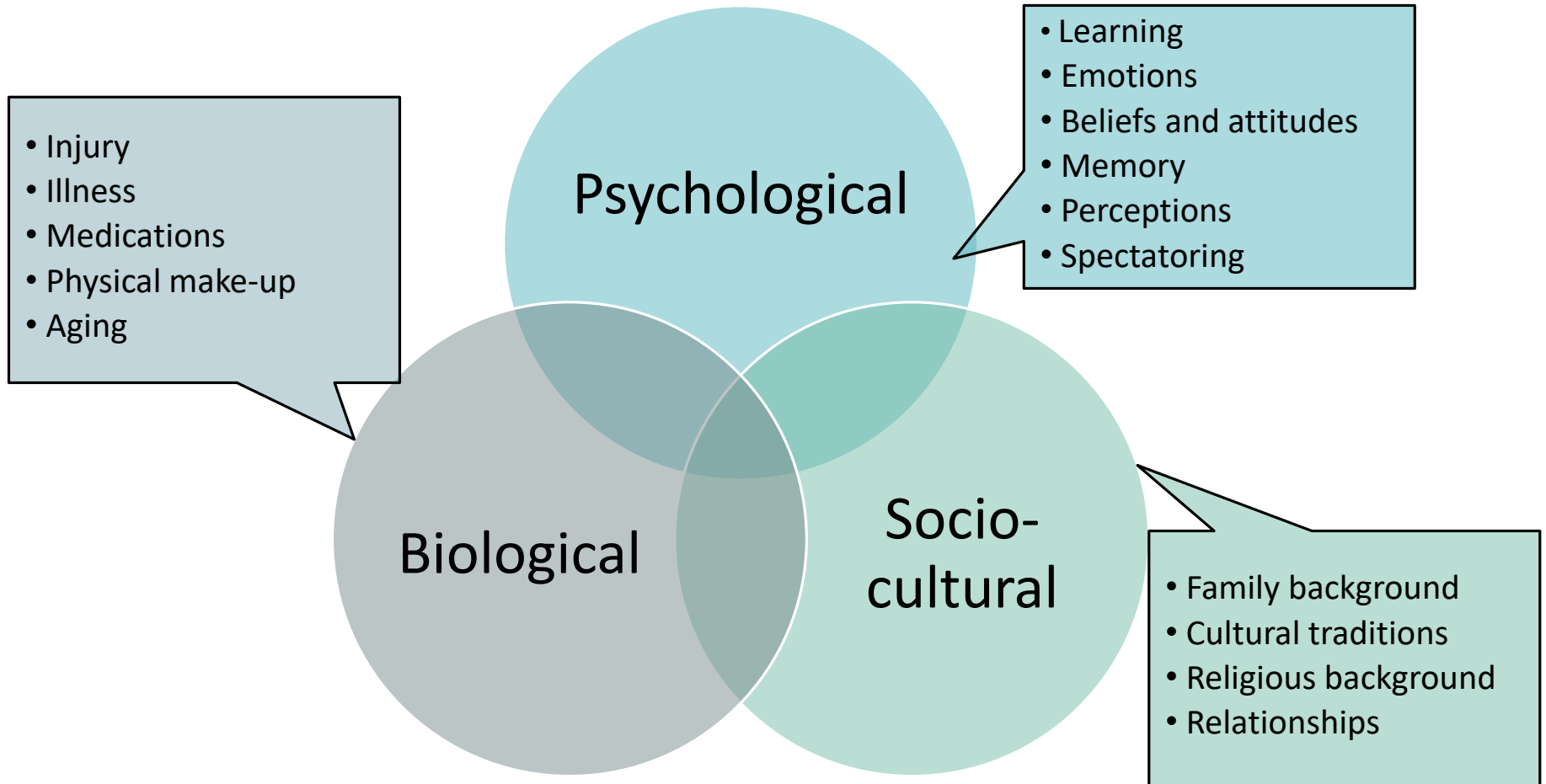


Sexual Dysfunction

- Sexual dysfunctions are disorders in which people cannot respond normally in key areas of sexual functioning
- As many as 31% of men and 43% of women in the U.S. suffer from such a dysfunction during their lives
- Sexual dysfunctions are typically very distressing, and often lead to sexual frustration, guilt, loss of self-esteem, and interpersonal problems
- Often these dysfunctions are interrelated; many patients with one dysfunction experience another as well



Biopsychosocial Model of Sexual Dysfunction



Treatment for Sexual Function Problems

Physical Therapy/Rehabilitation

- Extremely Important!

Psychotherapy

- Marital Counseling
- Sex Therapy (AASECT)

Pharmaceuticals

- Oral medications
- Penile injections

Penile Implants

Oral Medications

Viagra, Cialis, Levitra

Talk to your doctor to ensure these would be appropriate for your case

Foreplay is still crucially important to stimulate arousal and allows the drugs to be most effective.

Viagra and Cialis can be less effective if taken after a large meal. The drug absorbs into your system faster when there is less in your stomach.

For some men it can take 30 mins or more for the drug to reach it's maximum level in their body so allow time for that

It may take multiple attempts to achieve an erection.

BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELVES!!!!!!

Be in communication with your doctor if it isn't working.

Rehabilitation

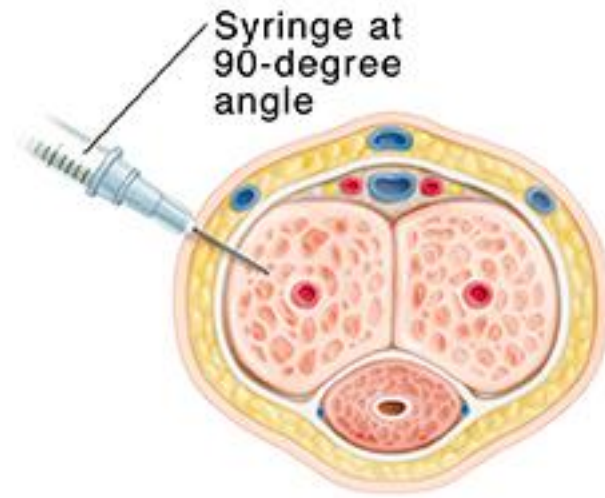
If there is prolonged periods without gaining erections, important to maintain the health of the penile vascular tissue as your body recovers

- Post-surgery, Post-radiation effects, etc.
- Pump, medications, injections as appropriate
- Discuss which, if any, might be appropriate in your case with your doctors.
- Also important to discuss what sexual activity is safe during each stage of recovery
- The goal of penile rehab is to maintain the health of the penile tissue and blood vessels as nerves and tissue impacted by surgery or side effects recovers

This is the area where men can have a significant impact on their long-term recovery of baseline erectile functioning

<https://www.mskcc.org/clinical-updates/early-intervention-can-prevent-permanent-erectile-dysfunction>

Penile Injections



Penile Injections

The idea of an giving oneself an injection in the penis can be distressing. However, with practice many men overcome this fear.

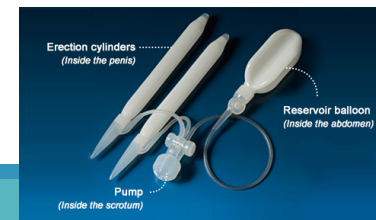
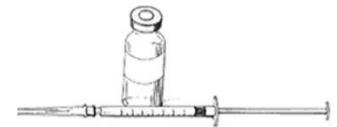
Important to have discussion with your partner about where and when to give the injection

- Important to consider
 - Both partners' comfort with observing the injection
 - Whether it would be preferable to give the injection prior to any foreplay, or to briefly pause foreplay to give yourself the injection
- Can take 10 minutes for the injection to take full effect
- Foreplay is still crucially important for both partners

As with oral medications, seek medical care if erection lasts for more than 3-4 hours. Also, contact your doctor if you notice severe pain, scarring, or curvature of the penis.

Medical Management of Erectile Dysfunction

Type of Therapy	Advantages	Disadvantages
<i>Oral Medication</i> (Viagra, Levitra or Cialis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pills taken by mouth • Effective in many men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not effective in patients who have prostatectomy, unless nerve-sparing approach used • Side effects including headache. Viagra and Levitra may cause blurry vision. Cialis may cause joint or back pain • Should not be used in some patients • 30-60 minute wait for response • Cannot be taken with some medications
<i>Penile Injection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective (up to 90 percent) • Few systemic side effects • Works in three to five minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some medications require refrigeration • Requires injection • Requires office training • Can cause penile pain • Can cause prolonged erection and penile fibrosis or scarring
<i>Vacuum Device</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Least expensive • No systemic side effects • Effective in 66-71 percent of patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can cause numbness or bruising • Less “natural” erection • Trapped ejaculate • Some find awkward to use
<i>Penile Prosthesis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective • For men who have failed or are not satisfied with medical treatment of impotence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small risk of infection • Requires anesthesia and surgery • May require replacement after many years of use



Mind/Body Aspects of Biological Interventions

Effectiveness of pharmaceutical or other aids can be impacted by the state of mind of the man at the time of use

- Put another way, the effectiveness of these interventions can be enhanced through the reduction of anxiety/worry/performance expectations

Foreplay will continue to be important for you and your spouse. It may play an even larger role after functioning has been altered during oncology treatment.

What is sex therapy?



- A type of psychotherapy
- Addresses concerns about sexual function, sexual feelings, sexuality, and intimacy
- Focuses on the cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and relational factors that impact sexuality and sexual function
- Sex therapy is provided by licensed therapists (e.g., psychologists, marital and family therapists, social workers) who have special training in issues related to sex and relationships

Sensate Focus

- To provide a structured approach which allows the couple to rebuild physical intimacy and gradually rebuild their sexual relationship
- To identify the specific maintaining factors of sexual problems
- To provide specific techniques to deal with particular sexual problems
- Usually involves three stages: 1) Non-genital, 2) Genital, 3) Penetration



Relational Aspects of Sexuality

Changes in sexual function can be distressing to relationships as they can cause fairly significant changes to the partners' sexual "routine" or script

It is normal to have feelings of anxiety about performance and the satisfaction of your partner. But these can be managed/reduced through communication between partners

It is important to:

- Have discussions about how you are feeling
- Be patient with each other and yourselves as you navigate the changes
- Have fun exploring new ways to express your sexuality through trial and error
- If you are having difficulty finding resolutions, reach out to a marital or sex therapist

Aids

Lubrication

- Don't use petroleum-based lubricants
- Water-based vs Silicone-based

Stimulation

- Vibration
 - Pulse Solo and Duo
 - Vibrating ring