New Treatments for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) Without Sexual Side Effects

Sexual side effects of treatment for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) are often a distressing problem for patients and/or their sexual partners. Until recently, virtually all treatments for BPH have been associated with risks of erectile dysfunction and/or ejaculatory dysfunction. Pharmacologic therapy for BPH provides modest improvement in urinary function but up to 30% of patients discontinue treatment because of insufficient improvement in urinary symptoms and/or bothersome side effects, including sexual dysfunction. Surgical therapy for BPH provides better levels of improvement in urinary function but also higher levels of sexual dysfunction. Studies show that 3 to 14% of men suffer from erectile dysfunction and 30 to 80% suffer from ejaculatory dysfunction after surgical treatment for BPH.

New FDA-approved methods for treatment of BPH have shown significant benefits to urinary function without sexual side effects, making these new treatment options very attractive for sexually active men who need surgical treatment for BPH. One of these treatments is the cystourethscopic insertion of permanent adjustable transprostatic implants, which is also known as the Urolift® prostatic urethral lift procedure. In two key publications,1,2 the incidence of erectile and ejaculatory dysfunction after adjustable transprostatic implants was zero. Another method for treatment of BPH is transurethral needle ablation of the prostate using water vapor convective thermal energy, which is also known as WAVE or Rezum®. In a randomized, controlled study,3 there was significant improvement in urinary function and no de novo erectile or ejaculatory dysfunction after water vapor convective thermal energy.

The Sexual Medicine Society of North America (SMSNA) acknowledges the Urolift® prostatic urethral lift procedure and the Rezum® transurethral needle ablation of the prostate using water vapor convective thermal energy as options for the treatment of BPH. Given their favorable sexual side effect profile over alternative therapies, the SMSNA recommends that they be recognized and considered as a viable treatment option in men with symptomatic BPH.

