

Porterbrook Clinic

Sheffield Care Trust

Dealing with the symptoms of loss of **Sexual Desire in Women**

Use of Bupropion Therapy

Information for Users of our service

Dr Kevan Wylie
Clinical Lead
Porterbrook Clinic
75 Osborne Road
Nether Edge
Sheffield S11 9BF

Telephone: 0114 271 6671

Fax: 0114 271 8693

Email: mail@porterbrookclinic.org.uk

www.porterbrookclinic.org.uk



Loss of sexual desire is a common problem, estimated to affect about 1 in 5 people in the population. Women are more likely to be affected, and as many as 3 in 10 women are thought to have reduced or absent interest in sexual activity. The medical term for this condition is Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder or HSDD.

The exact cause of HSDD is not known; however there appear to be many factors which may play a part in the condition, for example, medical and psychiatric disorders, hormonal factors and relationship issues. These factors will be assessed both at our clinic during your appointment and also using specific blood tests where necessary.

Because there are many causes to HSDD, treatment can be either psychological or medical, or a combination of both. One medical treatment that may be helpful is a drug called bupropion. Bupropion has been used for many years as an antidepressant in the US and to help people who want to stop smoking here in the UK. It is not currently licensed for the treatment of HSDD; however, there is some evidence to suggest that

bupropion may increase sexual desire when it is taken by non-depressed women.

The desire for sex is thought to be controlled by a chemical called dopamine, which is present in the brain. The medication bupropion causes more dopamine to be available for use in the body, which may explain the increase in sexual desire reported by some women when taking bupropion.

At present, clinical evidence is limited, however research performed over recent years, studied the effect that bupropion has on a group of non depressed women with HSDD, focusing specifically on changes in sexual desire. Nearly half of the women who completed the study reported positive benefits of the medication, including an increased interest in sexual activity and an increased frequency of sexual arousal and desire. Similar research performed in 1987 showed improvement in HSDD when taking bupropion in approximately 3 out of every 5 patients.

All research performed suggests that bupropion is a safe medication with few side effects. Side effects reported

include headache and more rarely insomnia, tremor and rash. Bupropion has been associated with seizures when taken by people who have a predisposition to them. Therefore, if you have ever had a seizure before, are dependent on alcohol or benzodiazepines, or if you have ever had an eating disorder or a tumour of the central nervous system (the spinal cord and brain), bupropion may not be the best medication for you and you should speak to your doctor about this.

If you choose to have a trial of bupropion therapy, we will ask you to sign our consent form to indicate that you are aware that this treatment is not currently licensed for treatment of HSDD. You will also be followed up in clinic at regular intervals in order to assess whether the medication has been helpful for you.

The medication comes in the form of a 150mg tablet, one to be taken in the morning. From the second week, an additional tablet should be taken.

Written by KATE EDWARDS.
Approved by Kevan R Wylie for the
Porterbrook Clinic, Sheffield
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