Sexual medicine - future trends

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Sexual medicine is an interdisciplinary specialty investigating biological, psychological and social aspects of human sexual relationships. Although not life-threatening, sexual dysfunctions (SD) are very common, disturbing and causing individual and interpersonal distress, and affecting the ability for reproduction. Libido-, arousal-, orgasm-, and pain disturbances are diagnosed in both genders. The main progress in sexual medicine was achieved in the field of erectile dysfunction (ED). It is not only part of the quality of life, but an indicator for the men's health status. A new era in the "erectology" started after the introduction of the first phosphodiesterase 5 (PDE-5) inhibitor sildenafil on the market around 18 years ago. Later tadalafil, vardenafil and avanafil gave more possibilities for individualized treatment and very soon PDE-5 inhibitors became first line therapy for ED. Being safe and effective, it is expected their development to continue in the future and several new molecules are progressing in the clinical trial programs. Besides their pro-erectogenic effect, PDE-5 inhibitors possess other features such as beneficial effect in pulmonary arterial hypertension, cardioprotective in ischemia, myocardial hypertrophy and cardiomyopathy, potentiating the effect of some anticancer drugs, etc. Some of them are already approved indications, others need more evidence based data. Several new ED treatment options are under investigations targeted on central or peripheral (cavernosal) level. Female SD are more common compared to male, but still comparatively neglected and with limited pharmacological treatment options.

In conclusion, the complex pathogenetic mechanisms of sexual dysfunctions need the development of a broad spectrum therapeutic armamentarium, giving the chance to focus the intervention on the leading problems in the particular patient.

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