The Role of Smoking in Female Sexual Dysfunction

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To Editor,

Smoking is a developing health challenge all over the world. Studies showed that more than 30% of women of reproductive age smoke in some countries. Researchers reported that smoking can cause various problems (1). Sexual dysfunction includes psychiatric experiences that are apparent as impaired libido, sexual arousal, orgasm, and intercourse pain. Female sexual dysfunction affects about 40–45% of women. Sexual dysfunction is an important component that impacts the quality of life (2,3). The prevalence of sexual disorders among smokers has increased in the domain of arousal, orgasm, and sexual satisfaction. Libido disorder, sexual arousal disorder, and pain are more common in the passive smoker (4). With the increase in the number of cigarettes, the sexual function score in women decreases, so the score of sexual function in moderate-to-heavy smokers is significantly higher than that in other types of cigarettes. Different mechanisms have been mentioned regarding the effect of nicotine on sexual dysfunction among women. Nicotine can inhibit ovarian function and have an anti-estrogenic effect by increasing the formation of catechol estrogen metabolites. On the other hand, the reproductive system is sensitive to estrogen, and the anti-estrogens effect of nicotine and cigarettes reduces blood flow. Cigarette smoke may reduce genital engorgement and vascularization by increasing the atherogenic index and vasoconstrictive effect. Reducing the level of nitric oxide, increasing the formation of b-adrenergic receptors, and increasing the anticholinergic effect caused by nicotine are effective on the blood flow disorder of the genital area and may reduce vaginal lubrication, causing painful intercourse (5). In the last few years, hookah smoking (the old method of tobacco smoking) has been increasing among women. The side effects of hookah smoking are higher in women than in men (6). Based on our searches, the studies on sexual dysfunction and hookah are extensively incomplete. Due to the high prevalence of smoking and positive attitude to hookah among women, it is necessary to conduct more studies in this regard. The results of studies can also help to increase the sexual health of women.

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Authors’ Contribution

VF,NR and MB participated in study design. ET contributed to manuscript review. All of authors confirmed the final manuscript.

Competing Interests

None.

Ethical Approval

Not applicable.

References