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The search for a true aphrodisiac for women may be over.

RESearchers in the Netherlands say they've come up with a potion that produces genital arousal in women. They report their findings in the February 2000 issue of the Archives of General Psychiatry.

The drug used is able to trigger sexual desires, fantasies and lust because of the increase in vaginal arousal, according to a study published in a prestigious medical journal. This isn't something you can buy over-the-counter, but it could be a therapy - and libido boost - for women who for medical or other reasons have problems with physiological sexual arousal.

The methodology of this double-blind, placebo-controlled experiment with women is really important to understand because there is a time lag involved.

Researchers at Utrecht University say giving .5 mg of the sublingual testosterone to healthy premenstrual young women volunteers, and showing them a 5-minute videotape depicting intercourse, caused a sharp jump in the blood concentrations of testosterone within 15 minutes. However, the hormone levels declined within 90 minutes.

So, here's what is significant. About 4.5 hours after a single dose of testosterone treatment, a significant increase in genital arousal occurred, along with women reporting they felt "sexual lust." Previous experiments with testosterone only looked at short-term results.

In other words, there's a lag period after taking the testosterone before sexual sensations soar. This may be because steroid hormones causes neurophysiological alterations in the sensory centers of the brain - a process that can take several hours to several days.

So, the brain gets wired into the hormonal changes in 4.5 hours and creates the aphrodisiac effect of the drug. It should also be noted that measurable vaginal pulse amplitude - or arousal - increases steadily over the 4.5 hour period.

Now that we know this testosterone cocktail can stimulate sexual arousal in women, there will probably be a growing demand for the drug. Again, caution and a physician's advice is in order before trying any hormonal therapy.

At least we've come up with one true aphrodisiac among all the fake potions, pills and folklore.

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