the association between LUTS and ED has been attributed to the age link with a huge impact in the QoL at older ages. However, a large variety of large-scale epidemiological studies documented an age-independent relationship between LUTS and ED leading to a new research paradigm in search for the causal link. In fact, the MSAM-7 study (Multinational Survey of The Aging Male) revealed that erection problems (IIEF validated) were significantly more common in men with LUTS, and were strongly related to the severity of LUTS (IPSS validated), independently of the effects of age and other comorbidities.

However, even if there is a link between LUTS and ED from an epidemiological perspective, the fact is that the causal relationship must be shown to have biological plausibility before acceptance is possible. Four pathophysiological mechanisms currently support this relationship:
• The Nitric Oxide Synthase (NOS) / nitric oxide (NO) theory
• Reduction in the NOS-containing nerves in the prostate, bladder and penis (in the presence of common risk factors for ED), suggests a possible increase in smooth muscle cell proliferation which may result in structural changes in the prostate and bladder leading to LUTS.
• The autonomic hyperactivity and metabolic syndrome hypothesis
• LUTS as a part of the metabolic syndrome which includes glucose intolerance, insulin resistance, obesity, dyslipidaemia and hypertension, all known risk factors for ED. These factors are associated with an increased sympathetic activity that can be involved in prostate growth, LUTS and DE with noradrenaline representing the common link.
• The Rho-kinase activation/endothelin pathway
• Increased Rho-kinase activity upregulates smooth muscle tone. Endothelin (a potent vasoconstrictor), is possibly involved in the increased smooth muscle activity found in both LUTS and ED and is dependent on Rho-kinase activity that acts downstream from these receptors.
• Pelvic atherosclerosis
• Pelvic ischaemia can induce fibrosis, smooth muscle atrophy and non-compliance of the bladder. It also results in stromal fibrosis, glandular cystic atrophy and increases in smooth muscle contractility of the prostate, and penile fibrosis in the corpus cavernosum tissue. The increased production of TGF-β1 impairs neurogenic relaxation of the prostate and erectile tissue, involving a downregulation of the NO pathway.

Recent studies suggest that PDE-5 inhibitors (PDE5-I) might have a beneficial effect on LUTS probably through the NO pathway. Under this treatment, both the International Prostatic Symptom Score (IPSS) and the International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF) improved from baseline. As NO and PDE5 enzymes have been identified in the human prostate, the improvement of both LUTS and ED might be mediated by an increased NO activity which leads to smooth muscle cell relaxation. Although placebo-controlled trials are needed to confirm the impact of these drugs on both LUTS and ED, the preliminary results reinforce the need for a common approach to managing these two highly prevalent and bothersome conditions.

Gender Identity Disorder and psychotherapy: an attachment theory perspective

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Objective: The current research project was aimed to explore in adult patients suffering from Gender Identity Disorder (GID) the theme related to the specific nature of the States of Mind with Regard to Attachment and the influence of the Dismissing Attachment Internal Working Model on the relative resistance to the psychological investigation of the patients’ clinical and existential experiences.

Methodology: All patients suffering from GID, who came to the Functional Area of Psychology of the Department of Neuroscience of Federico II University Hospital requesting treatment to provide psychological assistance for problems connected to Gender Dysphoria, among 2005 and 2007, were registered in sequential order. The following tests were administered to all patients: 1) MMPI-2; 2) Adult Attachment Interview. The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS 12.0.

Results: The results confirm the increase, among people with this disorder, of Insecure Conditions of the Mind, especially of the Dismissing type, and of Unresolved Status of the Mind with respect to Traumas or Losses. Moreover, dismissing subjects tend to reflect a relative resistance to psychotherapeutic treatment.

Discussion: On the basis of the preliminary results of our research, we discuss how psychological intervention could have a dual objective: 1) Improving the possibility of access to a more satisfying emotional-relational life. 2) Allowing an adequate working-through of complex traumatic events, which appear to pepper the life experiences of individuals with this condition and which often seem not have been adequately worked through.

No Barriers Sex

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After a long and intolerable silence, science first and then our culture, have gradually tended to grant all people the right to live and to express their sexuality. However it seemed it was hard for the necessary strategies to emerge and to face problems connected with emotional feelings and sexuality of people with disabilities. And yet this is the main task for both people with disabilities and all those people who struggle for them: to let disabled people be as independent as possible and to give them the opportunity to live their lives making their own decisions and to eventually share feelings and emotions with someone special. So it is important to give space to their desires and to return the caresses of their hands.

The modern use of the term “differently able” instead of “disabled” still moves us away from the essence of the prob-