

Original Research Article

Psychological Factors Associated with the Frequent Use of Aphrodisiacs during Sexual Activity among Men in South-South Nigeria

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Abstract: Men use aphrodisiac substances during sex for a mix of psychological, physiological, social, and cultural reasons. Using aphrodisiac substances whether herbal, pharmaceutical, or recreational—can affect male psychological health in several ways. These effects depend on frequency of use, underlying health conditions, expectations about sexual performance, and the type of substance used. Many men may begin to believe that sexual performance is impossible without the substance and this can lead to: decreased natural sexual confidence, reliance on external aids and anxiety about sexual failure if the substance is unavailable. This psychological dependency can be as impactful as physical addiction. This study is aim to evaluate the Psychological Factors Associated with the Frequent Use of Aphrodisiacs During Sexual Activity Among Men in South-South Nigeria. This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 women. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. The study lasted for a period of 2 months. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0 and $p < 0.05$ was significant. The results revealed that 75% of the participants were addicted to the use of aphrodisiac substance, 64% had anxiety, 72% were ashamed of constant erection, 68% were confused, 76% were depressed, 86% isolated themselves.

Keywords: Psychological Factors, Associated, Frequent, Aphrodisiac, Sexual Activity.

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INTRODUCTION

Aphrodisiac substance could be drug, food or drink that increase libido, enhance sexual pleasure, induce and sustain erection thus leading to sexual satisfaction (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2025). Several people

across the globe employ aphrodisiac substance to enhance their sexual performance and this has been a routine for them more especially, when meeting a new sexual partner for the first time (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2025).

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Erection is an important aspect of manhood that brings joy to every man who has attained puberty. Erection could save a man from committing suicide (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). Weak erection is interchangeably referring to as erectile dysfunction (ED) and is a common and serious health issue among men across the globe. The continual inability to achieve and sustain erection enough to allow full and excitable sexual intercourse is known as erectile dysfunction (ED). Erection is an important aspect of manhood and it brings joy to every man who has attained puberty. Erection can save a man from committing suicide. Weak erection has become rampant among men and this is a global threat because it can lead to several conditions (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). Male impotence can be caused by androgen deficiency in aging men, atherosclerosis, diabetes mellitus, spinal cord injury, high level of cholesterol, hypertension, prostate surgery, prostate and heart disease, penis anatomical deformity, social and psychological conditions as unhappy marital relationship, depression, and stress (Goel and Kumar, 2020). Aphrodisiac is a drink or food that arouse sexuality. It can be categorized into three groups according to their action mode as follows: increase sexual pleasure substances, increase libido substances (arousal, sexual desire), and increase sexual potency (erection effectiveness) (Goel and Kumar, 2020).

A lot of natural substances have historically been known as aphrodisiacs in Africa and Europe, like yohimbine and the mandrake plant, as well as ground rhinoceroses' horn in the Chinese culture and Spanish fly which is actually toxic (Ang, *et al.*, 2013; Evans, 1965). Enhanced sexual behavior may provide increased relationship satisfaction and self-esteem in humans (Montorsi, *et al.*, 1995).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study involving 250 males. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. The study lasted for a period of 2 months. Inclusion criteria were males between 18-47 years old. Exclusion criteria were those males that were above 47 years of age. Data were analyzed with SPSS version 25.0 and $p < 0.05$ was significant.

RESULTS

The results revealed that 75% of the participants were addicted to the use of aphrodisiac substance (Table 1), 64% had anxiety (Table 2), 72% were ashamed of constant erection, (Table 3), 68% were confused (Table 4), 76% were depressed (Table 5), 86% isolated themselves (Table 6).

Table 1: Participants who were addicted

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who were addicted	187	75.00
Participants who were not addicted	63	25.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 2: Participants that has anxiety

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who has anxiety	160	64.00
Participants who do not has anxiety	90	26.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 3: Participants who were ashamed of prolonged erection due to constant use of aphrodisiac substance

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who are ashamed	180	72.00
Participants who are not ashamed	70	28.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 4: Participants who are facing confusion

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Participants who are confused	170	68.00
Participants who are not confused	80	32.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 5: Participants who are depressed

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who are depressed	190	76.00
Participants who are not depressed	60	24.00
Total	250	100.0

Table 6: Participants who faced isolation due to prolong erection

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who faced isolation	215	86.00
Participants who not faced isolation	35	14.00
Total	250	100.0

DISCUSSION

Men use aphrodisiac substances during sex for a mix of psychological, physiological, social, and cultural reasons. Using aphrodisiac substances whether herbal, pharmaceutical, or recreational—can affect male psychological health in several ways. These effects depend on frequency of use, underlying health conditions, expectations about sexual performance, and the type of substance used. Several psychological factors have emanated from frequent or constant use of aphrodisiac substances during sex among males. Many men may begin to believe that sexual performance is impossible without the substance and this can lead to: decreased natural sexual confidence, reliance on external aids and anxiety about sexual failure if the substance is unavailable. This psychological dependency can be as impactful as physical addiction.

Physiologically, aphrodisiac substances enhance sexual performance by acting on the nervous system, hormonal system, cardiovascular system, and reproductive organs. Different substances work through different pathways, but most target sexual arousal, erection, libido, and stamina. Many aphrodisiacs affect the brain, which is the main center of sexual desire and arousal. Dopamine is the “desire and reward” neurotransmitter. Certain aphrodisiac substances increase dopamine levels thus in increased libido, enhanced pleasure and cause higher motivation for sexual activity. Also, some aphrodisiac substances influence hormones (Testosterone) involved in sexual function thus, leading to higher libido, improved sexual confidence and increased frequency of sexual desire. Reduction of Stress Hormones (Cortisol) may improve sexual drive indirectly. High cortisol reduces libido. Again, Erection depends on adequate blood flow to the penis. Many aphrodisiacs work through vasodilation. Following the Nitric Oxide (NO) Pathway sexual stimulation releases nitric oxide, NO activates the enzyme guanylate cyclase, increasing cGMP, cGMP causes smooth muscle relaxation in penile arteries, this allows greater blood inflow into the corpus cavernosum.

The study revealed that majority of the participants addicted to the use of aphrodisiac substance during sexual engagement. Men who experience difficulty in achieving or maintaining an erection often turn to aphrodisiac substances—natural, herbal, or pharmaceutical to enhance sexual performance. When this becomes frequent, a pattern of psychological dependency or addiction can develop. Poor erection is often perceived as a threat to masculinity, leading men to depend on enhancers to feel “normal” or “capable. Men who feel pressure to please their partners may overuse

aphrodisiacs to ensure long-lasting or firm erections. Instead of seeking medical evaluation for underlying health issues, many men turn to herbal stimulants, over-the-counter enhancers and alcohol or recreational substances and thus, repeated use becomes habitual. These men who have poor erection employed the use of aphrodisiac substance which provide fast relief and creating a psychological problem (Poor erection → take substance → successful sex) and this reinforces repeated use and eventually dependence. Again, faced reduced self-confidence, because the over rely on substances that erodes natural sexual confidence. Also, the study revealed that many of the participants have anxiety due to prolong use of aphrodisiac substance.

Constant use of aphrodisiac substances—whether herbal, pharmaceutical, or synthetic—can lead to various forms of anxiety. This anxiety is psychological, emotional, and behavioural in nature, and often becomes worse the longer the individual relies on these substances for sexual performance. When a man becomes dependent on aphrodisiacs to achieve or maintain an erection, he starts to believe that natural sexual performance is impossible without them. This creates fear around sexual encounters and this include: worrying before sex about whether the substance will work, Fear of disappointing a partner, overthinking erection quality and duration, stress when the substance is not available and over time, sex becomes a stressful event, not a pleasurable one. Again, because these men realize that they need a substance each time they want to perform sexual activity and may develop anxiety about this reliance. However, the body can become used to certain aphrodisiacs, causing reduced effectiveness this may leads to certain forms of anxiety including worry that the substance will no longer work, stress about needing stronger or more expensive enhancers, fear that performance will decline without escalating doses and this is similar to anxiety seen in other forms of substance dependency.

The study shows that many of the participants also experienced several psychological traumas including depression, confusion and isolation of themselves due to prolong erection as a result of aphrodisiac substance use. Again, when the participants try to stop using the substance, natural erections may be temporarily weak, libido may fluctuate, confidence may drop and this creates anticipatory anxiety, making it difficult to discontinue use.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that majority of the participants passed through various psychological

trauma. Constant use of aphrodisiac substances can create significant psychological consequences for men, including dependence, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, relationship issues, and emotional instability. While occasional use may not pose major risks, frequent reliance can undermine mental well-being and natural sexual functioning.

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