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# Trazodone Pre-treatment Screening and Side Effects Counseling at a Single Veterans Affairs Hospital

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**Disclosures: None**



## Introduction

- Priapism is a urologic emergency defined as a prolonged, painful erection lasting greater than 4 hours, not usually initiated by sexual stimuli or desire.
- There are a variety of risk factors for priapism, including the use of antipsychotics such as trazodone, and having a history of prolonged erections.
- There are several reports in the literature of trazodone use leading to both prolonged erections and priapism, but patients are often not counseled on these well-known side effects.

## Materials and Methods

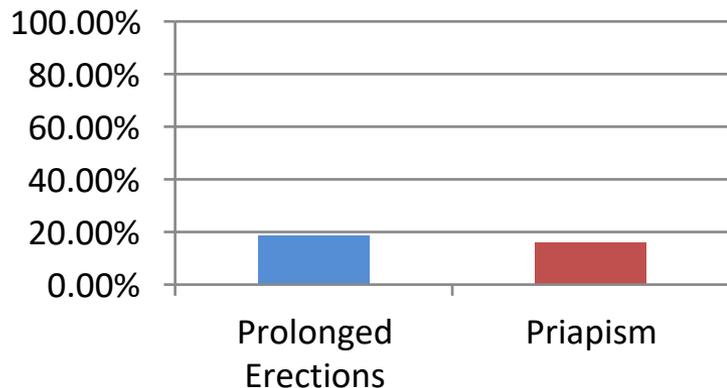
- A pharmacy search was performed at 1 center, the East Orange Veterans Affairs Hospital (EOVA), to identify all patients under the age of 50 currently taking trazodone as of February 27, 2019.
- Patients previously on trazodone or those who discontinued it prior to this date for any reason, including priapism, were not included.
- Patients were contacted via phone and if they agreed to participate were asked about information provided to them prior to medication initiation, occurrence of prolonged erections/priapism, and reporting rate to prescribing physicians.

## Results

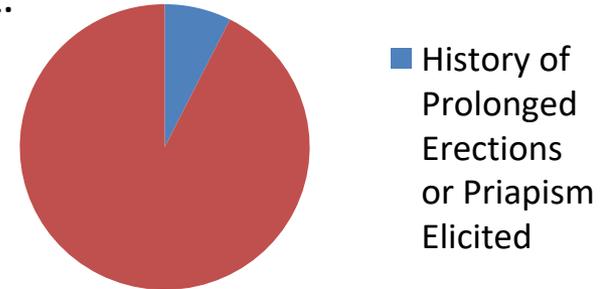


- 229 male average age of 38.57 +/- 6.88 years.
- Indication insomnia or depression.
- Dose ranged from 50mg – 100mg, two to three times a day.
- Prior to prescribing trazodone only 43/229 (18.78%) of patients were informed about the side effects of prolonged erections.
- Even fewer numbers of patients were informed about the risk of priapism, 37/229 (16.16%).

**Figure 1** Informed about sides effects prior to treatment



- 17/229 (7.42%) of patients were asked if they previously had any episodes of prolonged erection or priapism in the past.



- After the initiation of trazodone therapy 18/229 (7.86%) of patients developed prolonged erections.
- Only 2/18 patients who developed prolonged erections were informed about this risk prior to initiation of therapy.
- Only 5/18 of those who developed prolonged erections told their physicians.
- None of the patients who were actively taking trazodone had an episode of priapism while on the medication.



## Conclusions

- Patients taking trazodone are known to have an increased risk of prolonged erections and priapism.
- However, as this study shows prior to trazodone treatment only a fraction of patients were properly screened for previous prolonged erections or priapism and properly informed about the side effects of trazadone treatment.
- It is imperative that physicians appropriately screen patients prior to trazodone initiation, educate patients about the risks of prolonged erections and priapism and instruct patients to report any treatment side effects.