

## **The HelpED Study: Degree of Agreement Between Patients, Partners, and Physicians on the Erection Hardness Score of Men With Erectile Dysfunction**

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**Objectives:** To study the agreement between patients, partners, and physicians on the Erection Hardness Score (EHS) in men with erectile dysfunction (ED) consulting a general practice physician or urologist.

**Design and Methods:** This observational, multicentre study in Belgium enrolled men (age  $\geq 18$  y) in a stable heterosexual relationship ( $\geq 3$  mo). The degree of agreement was measured by Cohen's weighted Kappa coefficient.

**Results:** 447 men were recruited, completed the baseline questionnaire, and gave consent (64% aged 51–70 years; 62% in a stable relation  $>10$  years; 78% with ED problems  $\leq 3$  years). Physician baseline data were completed for 77% (345/447): 52% of these consulted to discuss ED, 80% had  $\geq 1$  ED risk factor, and a new ED treatment was proposed for 99%. Partners of 253 patients completed baseline questionnaires (52% aged 46–60 years; 54% attended the consultation). The mean  $\pm$  SD baseline EHS (range 1–4) was  $2.3 \pm 0.8$  (self-assessed),  $2.2 \pm 0.9$  (partner-assessed), and  $2.2 \pm 0.8$  (physician-assessed); the coefficient of agreement was 0.62 (95% CI, 0.54–0.71) for patients vs partners, 0.48 (95% CI, 0.41–0.56) for patients vs physicians (0.47 [95% CI, 0.37–0.57] when limited to patients with a participating partner), and 0.32 (95% CI, 0.21–0.42) for partners vs physicians. 60% (266/447) of patients and 152 of their partners returned the 2–4 month follow-up questionnaire. As assessed by patients vs partners, the EHS was improved for 74.7% vs 75.4% (including 58% [57/98] vs 57% [27/57] of those with EHS3 who improved to EHS4), was unchanged for 22.6% vs 21.2%, and deteriorated for 2.7% vs 3.4% ( $P < 0.0001$  for change between visits); coefficient of agreement, 0.60 (95% CI, 0.45–0.75).

**Conclusions:** The agreement in EHS between patient, partner and physician supports the use of this simple instrument in clinical practice.

Topic: 7. ED Medical Treatment

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