

## **Male Chronic Pelvic Pain and Sexual Function**

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[www.physioforwomen.com](http://www.physioforwomen.com)

Male Chronic Pelvic Pain (CPPS) is a condition which affects approximately 2-20% percent of males, according to various studies. The symptoms of pelvic pain in men can include constant or intermittent pain in the lower abdomen, lower back and hips, and pain can be referred to the testicles, anus, perineum, or penis. Sometimes it may feel as though the pain is inside the pelvis, as though the bladder or intestines are tender. Often, it is very difficult to identify a cause for these pains and in many cases men with these symptoms may have been to various doctors including urologists, gastroenterologists, orthopedists and rheumatologists. After a physical examination which may include an ultrasound or more invasive procedures, they are often told that there are no physical findings that explain the symptoms and are thus left feeling as though the pain may be all in their head. While in fact there may be a psychological component to pelvic pain as states of stress or anxiety tend to heighten pain perception, the fact is that pelvic pain most likely has several causes, and the ones that are most overlooked, have to do with the musculoskeletal system. This system includes the muscles, soft tissues and bones and the way they interact with the flow of blood and function on nerves. For example, a contracted muscle in the lower back may tighten around a nerve and cause pain which may radiate

down the leg, and in some cases, to the genitals. In this scenario, it is easy to see why this condition could affect sex.

In fact, male pelvic pain is linked to many sexual difficulties, and while just having pain certainly puts a damper on libido and sexual function in general, with pelvic pain, it is sometimes the sex itself which triggers the painful symptoms. Some men may begin to feel pelvic pain upon becoming erect, while others report pain with ejaculation. In many cases, men become so anxious during sex about the possibility of the severe pain interfering with the sexual experience that they suffer from premature ejaculation. In fact, a Turkish study (link: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez> ) reported that 77% of men with pelvic pain complained of premature ejaculation.

There is some evidence that physical therapy (link: [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?cmd=retrieve&db=pubmed&list\\_uids=15947608,11696740,16952676&dopt=citation](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?cmd=retrieve&db=pubmed&list_uids=15947608,11696740,16952676&dopt=citation)) may be very helpful for the treatment of both the symptoms of pelvic pain, as well related sexual function difficulties, including the pain during sex and the premature ejaculation. In the treatment of pelvic pain, physical therapists treat restrictions that are created by tight muscles and soft tissue. They use treatments including massage, trigger point release, skin-rolling and muscle stretching. These treatments help to improve pelvic blood flow, and general mobility of the trunk and pelvis. This helps to decrease painful symptoms, which in turn improve the quality of the sexual experience.

Although pelvic pain in men is not a well known condition and even many doctors are confused as to how to go about treating the

condition, there are several organizations and websites devoted to assisting patients and providing resources. Below is a resource list of relevant websites:

<http://www.pelvicpain.org/>

<http://www.chronicprostatitis.com/>

<http://www.pelvicpainhelp.com/>

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