

HIGH PREVALENCE OF LOW TESTOSTERONE LEVELS IN MALE PATIENTS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

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Introduction: Recent neuroendocrinological studies have suggested that gonadal sex hormones play a significant role in the pathophysiology of schizophrenia. Low testosterone levels are also associated with negative symptoms in chronic schizophrenia. Patients receiving treatment for schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder also show high rates of sexual dysfunction. Studies suggest that testosterone augmentation may play a potential therapeutic role in these patients.

Objectives: To study a cohort of schizophrenia patients for the presence of hypotestosteronemia.

Aims: To establish that low testosterone hormone levels occur at a lower age in schizophrenia population.

Methods: We reviewed the total testosterone levels of all male schizophrenic patients seen in our office over a period of one year for a routine yearly physical. The blood was tested by LabCorp using the liquid chromatography/tandem mass spectrometry (L/MS-MS). Normal values using this sensitive method are between 348.0-1197 ng/dL.

Results: There were a total of 61 male schizophrenia patients who had their testosterone levels tested during this period. Their ages ranged from 22 to 48 years. 23 (38%) out of the 61 men had serum testosterone less than 348 ng/dl, while 38 (62%) had testosterone levels between 348 ng/dl and 1197 ng/dl. None had testosterone levels above normal.

Conclusions: A significant number of our male patients with schizophrenia had hypotestosteronemia. Since gonadal sex hormones play a significant role in the patho-physiology of schizophrenia, testosterone levels should be routinely measured in the male patients. The role of testosterone supplementation in these patients needs to be further explored.