Standard Practice in Sexual Medicine
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Members of the ISSM Standards Committee attending the preparatory meeting for Standard Practice in Sexual Medicine in Rüdesheim, Germany, 31st August–4th September, 2005.
Standard Practice in Sexual Medicine

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The modern era in sexual medicine started in the 1970s when a few devoted pioneers and visionaries began to revolutionize our thinking and understanding in this field.

Prior to that time, sexual dysfunctions in men, particularly erectile disorders, were thought to be purely psychogenic or in rare cases caused by testosterone deficiency. Treatment of sexual disorders was considered to be predominantly the business of sex therapists or rarely of endocrinologists. And at that time, knowledge about female sexual disorders was practically non-existent; female sexuality was little more than a blank spot in sexual medicine.

The introduction of completely new surgical procedures, such as corpus cavernosum revascularization and penile implants, for the treatment of impotence, and the invention of new and creative diagnostic procedures, such as penile angiography, dynamic cavernosometry and penile Doppler ultrasonography, expanded our knowledge in this field and contributed to the better understanding of the causes and treatments of sexual dysfunctions. Several exceptional medical scientists deserve to be considered the true pioneers of this novel thinking in sexual medicine. First, Vaclav Michal, a Czechoslovakian vascular surgeon, introduced the concept of passive erection for the diagnosis of vasculogenic erectile dysfunction and the technique of penile arterial revascularization for the treatment of vasculogenic impotence. Jean-Francois Ginesté and A. Romieu, the inventors of the radiologic exploration of impotence, introduced selective pudendal arteriography and dynamic cavernosography as key procedures in the diagnosis of vasculogenic impotence. M.P. Small and H.M. Carrion invented the first internationally marketed rigid penile implant and B. Scott invented the first hydraulic penile implant. Gorm Wagner focused his scientific investigations on the physiologic and pathophysiologic processes involved in sexual responses and how they contribute to the manifestation of sexual dysfunctions in both sexes. Dr Wagner later became the first President of the International Society for Impotence Research, later renamed the International Society for Sexual Medicine. In the late 1970s, Adrian W. Zorgniotti, of New York University, gave the new scientific field of sexual medicine an organizational framework by convening the first and second conferences on “Corpus Cavernosum Revascularization” in 1978 in New York and in 1980 in Monte Carlo. After 1980, these conferences were continued at two year intervals, becoming first the World Congresses of Impotence Research in the 1980s and 1990s and then the Congresses of the International Society for Sexual Medicine in the first decade of the new century. Gathering biennially up to 2000 physicians and researchers from around the world, the first several of these Congresses made it clear that considering sexual dysfunctions as purely psychogenic was inaccurate and a new era in the history of sexual medicine was launched.

Having attended all these Congresses since 1980, we learned in person of the rapid progress being made in the field of sexual medicine. This book, the
work-product of the Standards Committee of the International Society for Sexual Medicine, classifies what has been accomplished so far and identifies where the main emphasis of future trends may be. This book updates current knowledge and present standards in the field of sexual medicine for both genders. It demonstrates as well the growing importance of female sexual medicine and psychology.

With this statement, we would like to express our thanks to all the members of the ISSM Standards Committee, especially to the Chairmen and Chairwomen of the respective sub-committees. Without their dedicated and untiring engagement, this work would never have happened in such a short time. Our deep gratitude extends also to the exceptional contribution of Astrid Brendt and the superb work of Helen Harvey and Blackwell Publishing without whose dedication and support this project could not have been completed.

By increasing knowledge in sexual medicine of many thousands of colleagues who deal with sexual dysfunctions across this globe, we hope that the work of the ISSM Standards Committee will provide even better health services in this medical discipline. It is our wish that this work will enhance sexual health and quality of life for the tens of million of couples world-wide who face the challenges of sexual dysfunction.

Hartmut Porst, MD
Chairman
Jacques Buvat, MD
Co-Chairman
ISSM Standards Committee
2006
Foreword

It is a mystifying paradox that among the most important functions of the human body, sexuality has drawn more public attention than any other, yet sexual function is one of the last areas to receive the careful attention of medical scientists.

Many studies have shown that sexual health is a very important element of overall health and quality of life. Yet in both the developed and the developing worlds, social taboos and religious restrictions surround human sexuality. In some places, ignorance about sexuality, illogical mores and/or irrational ritual practices impede medical research, interfere with medical education about sexual health, contribute to the propagation of sexually-transmitted diseases and/or prevent individuals from achieving a fully healthy and happy life.

Since its inception in 1982, the International Society for Sexual Medicine (ISSM) has strived to alter the paradox between the immense impact that sexuality has on human behavior and the limited state of scientific research and knowledge in human sexuality. The basic goal of the Society has been to introduce sound scientific knowledge to the experimental and clinical aspects of sexual medicine. In addition, ISSM aims to guide the field of sexual medicine into a position of prominence and prestige in the panoply of healthcare disciplines; to promote public education about sexual health; and to provide its members with a rich international environment for the exchange of scientific ideas and information.

In its global efforts to promote the highest standards of research, practice and treatment in sexual healthcare, ISSM conducts international scientific meetings in every continent, maintains an international registry of sexual health problems and promotes scientific publications in female and male sexual medicine. For example, the Society’s official journal, The Journal of Sexual Medicine, has become widely acknowledged as the leading journal, by all standards, in this field.

Standard Practice in Sexual Medicine is another milestone in the history of the ISSM. As the Society addresses a multiplicity of challenges in sexual medicine, we are heartened at the focused consonance in this book between clinical problems and contemporary scientific literature. As its name states, this comprehensive volume proposes standards for current practice of both male and female sexual medicine and provides direction for future investigation. At the crossroads of our quest to enhance the quality of life for man and womankind, this book will be an invaluable source for many years to come, not only for the deeply inquiring young scientific mind but for the more seasoned practitioner as well.

We must be certain to recognize the Herculean efforts of the far-sighted Editors, Dr Hartmut Porst and Dr Jacques Buvat, and all of the individual chapter authors in making this book a reality. We are especially indebted to Dr Buvat who, during his term as President of ISSM, had the vision to create the ISSM Standards Committee. This scholarly book is the first work of that committee. The prodigious scientific contribution of Drs Porst and Buvat in compiling this book is an extraordinary legacy to the future of sexual medicine. On behalf of the ISSM, we place on record our sincere gratitude for their uncompromising and timely efforts.

P. Ganesan Adaikan
President

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President-Elect

International Society for Sexual Medicine
September 2006