

Does Cycling Affect Men's and Women's Sexual Health and Urinary Functions?

BOSTON, May 14, 2017 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- Two new studies evaluating the impact of cycling on the sexual health and urinary functions of men and women will be presented at a special press conference during the 112th Annual Meeting of the American Urological Association (AUA). Kevin McVary, MD, FACS, AUA spokesperson and urology professor and chair at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, will moderate the session, which will take place on Sunday, May 14 at 11:30 a.m., ET at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center in Boston, MA.

Cycling provides many well-known health benefits, but there have long been discussions and questions about the risks associated with prolonged perineal pressure in men and women who regularly bike. Previous studies have linked this pressure to numbness, pain and erectile dysfunction in men, and suggested cycling may also be a hazard to the sexual health of women; however new studies suggest otherwise.

Study Details

The Impact of Cycling on Men's Sexual and Urinary Functions (#PD45-05): Researchers conducted a survey of male athletes recruited from English-speaking sports clubs throughout the world. The study included nearly 4,000 participants, of whom 63 percent were cyclists who did not swim or run and 37 percent were swimmers or runners who did not cycle. Participants were queried about their physical activity and answered validated questionnaires including: The Sexual Health Inventory for Men (SHIM), International Prostate Symptom Score (I-PSS) and the National Institute of Health Chronic Prostatitis Symptom Index (NIH-CPSI). High intensity cycling was defined as cycling for longer than two years, more than three times per week and a daily average of more than 25 miles.

Results showed:

- Male cyclists have no worse erectile function than male non-cyclists.
- Cycling does not affect lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS).
- Cyclists had a higher average SHIM score (20.1 vs. 18.9) $p < 0.01$ than non-cyclists.
- Cyclists had higher odds of perineal numbness compared to non-cyclists.
- Cardiovascular benefits of exercise seem to outweigh any theoretical deterrent of cycling.
- Bike seat type had no significant effect on results.

Study Details

The Impact of Cycling on Women's Sexual and Urinary Functions (# PD44-03): Researchers also conducted an international study on female athletes recruited from English-speaking sports clubs to determine if cycling has an effect on the female genitourinary tract. The study included 2,691 participants. Thirty-nine percent (658) were cyclists and 61 percent (1,013) were swimmers or runners who did not regularly cycle. Participants answered questions about their physical activities, sexual function, urinary symptoms, history of urinary tract infections (UTI) and perineal numbness using the Female Sexual Function Inventory (FSFI) and the I-PSS.

Results showed:

- Cycling has no appreciable effect on female sexual or urinary functions.
- Female cyclists had significantly higher mean total FSFI scores (22.7 vs. 21.3, $p < 0.01$), as well as higher mean scores in each FSFI domain, except for satisfaction and pain.
- There were no significant urinary symptom differences between cyclists and non-cyclists.
- Female cyclists may have an increased risk of developing UTIs.

- High intensity cyclists (cycling for more than 2 years, more than 3 times a week and daily average of more than 25 miles cycled) were more likely to develop perineal numbness and saddle sores.
- Bike seat type had no significant effect on results.

As cycling gains in popularity, as both a hobby and a professional sport, it is important for the public to know that it has no credible link to urologic disease or sexual dysfunction," says Dr. McVary. "Men and women can benefit from the cardiovascular exercise of cycling without worrying about negative side effects to their urinary tract or sexual performance."

NOTE TO REPORTERS: Experts are available to discuss this study outside normal briefing times. To arrange an interview with an expert, please contact the AUA Communications Office at 410-689-3932 or e-mail cfrey@AUAnet.org.

About the American Urological Association: The 112th Annual Meeting of the American Urological Association takes place May 12 – 16 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center in Boston, MA.

Founded in 1902 and headquartered near Baltimore, Maryland, the American Urological Association is a leading advocate for the specialty of urology, and has more than 21,000 members throughout the world. The AUA is a premier urologic association, providing invaluable support to the urologic community as it pursues its mission of fostering the highest standards of urologic care through education, research and the formulation of health policy.

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