

Editors' introduction

Androgens are known to be essential for men's sexual performance and well-being, but their contribution to female health and sexuality is less well understood. The determination of what constitutes "insufficiency" or normative androgen levels in women has yet to be agreed upon. Basic mechanisms of androgen production and metabolism are under investigation, as are the risks and benefits of T replacement in women. While androgen is generally acknowledged to be associated with increased sexual appetite and sensation, muscle strength, and bone mass, in addition to positive effects on mood and vitality, concerns have been raised about the potential risks of long-term androgen replacement on physiological mechanisms and systems. These issues are of pressing concern as the availability of new forms of androgen replacement for women is increasing.

The Princeton Conference on Androgen Insufficiency in Women was convened to provide a balanced overview of basic science and clinical management issues and to offer a broad discussion of the role of androgen in women's health. The conference brought together a panel of international experts in the basic physiology of androgen metabolism and production, as well as researchers and clinicians familiar with its use in clinical practice. The role of androgen in women's health generally was addressed, as well as specific evidence for a diagnostic syndrome of androgen insufficiency in women. A major goal of the conference was to develop a consensus statement on the definition, diagnosis, and management of androgen insufficiency in women. Critical research issues and needs were also identified.

The papers in this supplement provide a comprehensive "state-of-the-art" overview of the role of androgens in women's health and sexuality. The presentations served as the scientific and clinical background for a consensus panel on the definition and diagnosis of androgen insufficiency in women. The final consensus statement is reported separately (1). We are deeply indebted to the distinguished international faculty who participated in the conference and are grateful for their outstanding contributions. Hopefully, this collection of papers and the resulting consensus statement will serve as a valuable guide for research and clinical practice in this rapidly evolving area of women's health.

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Reference

1. Bachmann G, Bancroft J, Braunstein G, Burger H, Davis S, Dennerstein L, et al. Female androgen insufficiency: the Princeton consensus statement on definition, classification and assessment. *Fert Steril* 2002; 77(4):660-5.