

**M**ost manufacturers and retailers of natural products can attest their primary consumers are women—that despite social advances that might indicate otherwise, women are still the primary shoppers for the family, especially when it comes to supplements and medical treatments. Presumably because of this, women are

perhaps more open to discussing issues of health than men might be.

So when it comes to sensitive subjects like benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or the enlarging of the prostate, and erectile dysfunction (ED), retailers are wise to keep in mind not only the personal nature of the matter, but the prevalence of these issues and how they can best help their customers in a tactful, informative manner.

### **BPH**

Though often kept private by those who suffer from it, BPH affects more than half of men in their 60's and as many as 90 percent of men in their 70's and 80's, according to the National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NKUDIC).

"These statistics demonstrate a steady number of men who may desire supplemental support for prostate



# Hitting *Below the Belt*

## Targeting Natural Treatments for BPH and ED

BY MELISSA KVIDAHL

health and issues," explained Sunil Kohli, COO of Health Plus, Inc. (Chino, CA). "We therefore see the state of this category as continually relevant and abundant with sales opportunities."

Rarely affecting men before the age of 40, symptoms can range from more frequent urination and urgency to a hesitant, interrupted or weak stream and leaking or dribbling, said NKUDIC. Despite its prevalence, scientists do not know the direct cause of BPH—just that age is definitely a factor.

And as shoppers age, natural products retailers know they are looking to purchase treatments that are side effect free, less expensive than pharmaceuticals and convenient to use. Scottie Jack, CEO of Nature's Healthy Supplements, Inc. (North Hollywood, CA), explained that the category growth is influenced by several factors.

"More individuals are actually educating themselves about natural product alternatives due to the vast amount of information available on the internet," he said, also noting that BPH's rate of increase corresponding with age, coupled with an increased life expectancy of men as compared to several decades ago, leads to an expanding market for those suffering from an enlarged prostate.

The company's Best Prostate supplement has grown on average 20 percent in month-to-month sales over the past six months.

Best Prostate contains 310mg beta-sitosterol, 15mg zinc citrate and 15mcg selenium in a vegetable capsule. According to Jack, beta-sitosterol helps to reduce waking at night due to the urge to urinate, helps to increase urinary flow and promote healthy urinary function, promotes a healthy prostate and can even relieve the symptoms of an enlarged prostate.

Also for prostate health, Health Plus Inc.'s Prostate Cleanse contains saw palmetto extract to inhibit the conversion of testosterone to DHT, the metabolite thought to be responsible for the enlargement of the prostate; pygeum bark extract as an anti-inflammatory; nettle root extract to maintain healthy bladder function;



pumpkin seed oil extract as a source of zinc and essential fatty acids; lycopene to reduce the risk of prostate cancer; and zinc, essential for hormonal metabolism.

According to Kohli, more men are turning to these supplements for prostate health because of an array of troubling side effects from prescription medications such as a decreased libido, erectile dysfunction and allergic reactions.

"Men who choose to consume dietary supplements are basically providing added nourishment to their prostate," Kohli said, noting the true benefits of these products. "Prostate support products are not treatments or cures, as we know, but retailers need to ensure their male cus-



treatment, reported AMA.

"Currently, more men may be highly stressed due to financial and job strains, and this can certainly affect their ability to attain a healthy erection and overall sexual performance," said Lauren Clardy, vice president of Sprunk-Jansen, LLC (Santa Rosa, CA). "Overall, the downturn in our economy can be capitalized upon by our industry.

People are looking to self treat rather than spend huge amounts of money on co-pays for patented drugs. We like to say sales have risen with virility!"

Yet despite the shopper's turn away from the prescription counter to the natural products store, ED prescription drug marketing has contributed to the

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tomers seeking support for prostate issues are aware of this and therefore have realistic expectations of use."

### Erectile Dysfunction

Linked with BPH as a men's health issue, as a side effect of many prescription BPH treatments, and shown in a 2004 study in the *Urology Times* to appear in 40 percent of men with lower urinary tract symptoms or enlarged prostates, is erectile dysfunction (ED). According to the American Medical Association (AMA), ED affects as many as 30 million men in the US chronically, plaguing 10 percent of the entire male population and 35 percent of men over the age of 60. Most troubling, perhaps, is that fewer than five percent of men with ED seek

success of natural treatments.

"ED drug marketing has created massive awareness and acceptance of taking a pill to deal with male sexual performance issues," explained Rod Tallman, CEO of LIFE SPAN Labs (Portland, OR), despite some ED drugs' side effects and an increased bootleg presence on the internet.

"The market for natural ED products remains steady mostly due to advertising by pharmaceutical companies promoting drug therapy solutions," agreed Trish Mahon, a member of the Jarrow Formulas (Los Angeles, CA) marketing team. "The marketing and advertising of Viagra alone has caused a boom in online searches for natural products with erectile benefits."

For those seeking help with ED, taking a prescription drug can not only

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have unwanted side effects, but can also result in psychological dependency, Tallman continued. "This is not so bad for men who suffer from full-on erectile dysfunction, but for the millions of men who use these drugs for an extra boost in their sexual performance and confidence, this can be a very damaging side effect," he said.

Men who seek help with ED through the use of a natural product or supplement, however, experience no such dependency because supplements are not intended for a "quick fix." Because they are taken daily, Tallman noted, they offer an overall boost in sexual performance and confidence, and there is no need to take a pill right before a sexual encounter and risk psychological dependence.

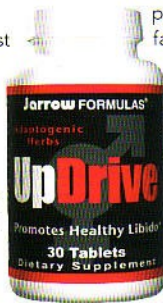
LIFE SPAN Labs' 112 Degrees for sexual performance contains *butea superba* for increasing sexual vigor; *tribulus terrestris*, an Indian plant used to support production of steroid hormones; *panax ginseng* for the increase of nitric oxide

and the improvement of erectile functions; and *açai* as a source of antioxidants.

Also supporting the production of healthy sex hormones is Jarow's UpDrive libido formula. Containing horny goat weed, fenugreek extract and maca root, it also promotes greater adrenal health and faster recovery.

From Sprunk-Jansen is Masculine™, which taps into the abilities of main active ingredient *asafetida*, a sex enhancer that works by dilating blood vessels and thereby allowing more blood to flow. Masculine is a once-per-day tablet that reduces fatigue while promoting energy, improves overall libido and performance, and increases sperm count, Clardy said.

Yet retailers beware: according to Tallman, the best thing retailers can do for their shoppers is remain proactive in the search for quality products. "This category is notorious for unscrupulous business practices and companies who will do or say anything to sell their products," he



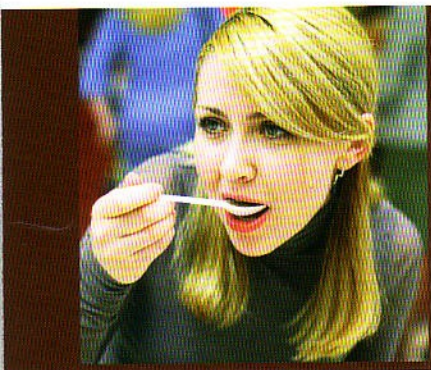
warned, noting that retailers should always check that the product was manufactured in a verified GMP facility, was tested for purity, and that the research and spokespeople for the product can offer reputable science.

"Don't be afraid to promote this category," encouraged Tallman. "Although this will always be somewhat of a sensitive category requiring tact and care in promoting, it is a huge market, and becoming a trusted retail resource for products in the category could be quite profitable." **VR**



## **i** For More Information:

- Health Plus Inc., (909) 627-9393
- Jarow Formulas, (310) 204-6936
- LIFE SPAN Labs, (503) 292-0537
- Nature's Healthy Supplements, Inc., (888) 768-3836
- Sprunk-Jansen, LLC, (888) 9-SPRUNK



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preservatives," said Misty Householder, Pflueger, marketing manager. "These toxins can cause indigestion, constipation and diarrhea to name a few symptoms. By using Pflueger USA and Derivatio together, digestive disorders will be comprehensively treated."

### On the Horizon

Health Plus' Kohli said overall, the company has been intrigued by certain phytochemicals in broccoli/broccoli sprouts and potential to thwart *H. pylori* in the gut, "but we are waiting for more scien-

## RECLAIMING DIGESTIVE HEALTH

tific validation," he added.

Lisa Peterson Love, marketing director with Sedona Labs, said the company would like to see more of the probiotic research focused on functional digestive disorders like constipation and bloating and detoxification of the colon.

"Colon detox can mean anything from a straight laxative to herbs that help colonic health to prebiotics and probiotics that support normal, ongoing detoxification of the colon. Good research on this area is needed," Love said.

For National Enzyme Company, improvements in blended formulas will be most notable. "Enzyme blends to target specific digestive issues will continue to grow as we learn more about the causes and effects of those digestive challenges," said Dockery. "Unique enzyme blends will also be formulated to enable our bodies to better utilize the macronutrients and micronutrients that are important to

good health. Probiotics continue to be very popular and specific blends of probiotics will probably eventually take prominence as we uncover more about how specific microorganisms interact together in the body."

Also, Dockery added, in our quest to make the most of what we do eat, we should see an increase in products especially formulated to enhance the bioavailability/bioaccessibility of particular nutrients. **VR**

## **i** For More Information:

- Deerland Enzymes, (770) 919-8907
- Enzymedica, (941) 505-5565
- Health Plus, Inc., (800) 822-6225
- JIVA Supplements, (800) 517-7606
- Maximum Living, (800) 445-2345
- National Enzyme Company, (417) 546-4796
- Pflueger USA, (877) 735-8872
- Sedona Labs, (888) 816-8804
- Specialty Enzymes & Biochemicals, (909) 613-1660