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Stretching device adds an inch to penis length

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By Anne Harding

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - A device that claims to lengthen the penis by exerting increasingly powerful traction on the organ seems to work, Italian researchers have found.

In a small pilot study, men who used the device for six months saw an average increase of 2.3 centimeters in penis length. Just two men withdrew from the study, due to pain and bruising of the penis.

Given the safety and effectiveness of the device, Dr. Paolo Gontero of the University of Turin and his colleagues say, it should be considered a "first-line treatment for patients seeking a penile lengthening procedure" -- if their findings are confirmed by other researchers.

But Gontero pointed out in an email to Reuters Health that using the device requires some commitment. "Patients need to be highly motivated to wear the device for at least 4 to 6 hours a day for a minimum of 3 months," he said, adding that they cannot wear it while sleeping or engaging in daily activity.

Most men who seek medical advice on increasing their penis size have normal-size penises, Gontero and his team note, meaning the problem is cosmetic rather than medical. "More than 90 percent of patients seeking lengthening of the penis do actually have a penis size falling in the

normal range," Gontero said. The medical definition of a too-small penis is four centimeters or less when flaccid, or seven centimeters or less when erect.

Just one of the 15 men in the current study had an abnormally small penis, 8 had undergone surgery that shortened their penises, and the rest had what is known as "penile dysmorphophobia," or the belief that one's penis is abnormally small when it actually falls within the normal range.

The men were instructed to use the device, the Andro-Penis made by Andromedical of Madrid, for at least 4 hours a day. It consists of a plastic ring and a silicone band joined by two metal rods, which can be adjusted to change traction force. Men used the device at increasing levels of traction force over the course of the study.

Penis length did increase, with most of the increase seen in the first month of using the device, the researchers found. Six months after the men had stopped using the device, the increase in length had been maintained. Study participants reported improvements in erectile function after using the device.

Various types of surgery have been tried for adding length and girth to the penis, but they carry risks including scarring, infection and sexual dysfunction, Gontero and his team note, and patient dissatisfaction with these surgeries is high.

What's more, the device seems to work better than the surgery. "The mean lengthening achieved with Andro-Penis was 1 inch. The mean lengthening achieved with surgery is more or less half an inch," Gontero reported.

SOURCE: BJU International, March 2009.