



## Determinants of Persistent Aphrodisiac Use among Men in Urban Communities of South-South Nigeria

Mube A. W.<sup>1</sup>, Gbaranor K. B.<sup>2\*</sup>, Oreh Adaeze C.<sup>3</sup>, John E. E.<sup>4</sup>, Ekeng O. B.<sup>5</sup>, Barinua-Gbaranor N. P.<sup>6</sup>, Etuk M. S.<sup>4</sup>, Okoish O. S.<sup>7</sup>, Monday S. N.<sup>8</sup>, Timi-Oladipo A.<sup>8</sup>, Bohr L. E.<sup>2</sup>, Oworji B. I.<sup>2</sup>, Osoma S. C.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Human Physiology, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Ministry of Health, Rivers State, South-South, Nigeria

<sup>4</sup>Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Health, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

<sup>5</sup>Department of Anaesthesia, Nile University, Abuja, Nigeria

<sup>6</sup>Department of Office and Information Management, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Rivers State, South-South, Nigeria

<sup>7</sup>Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

<sup>8</sup>Cardinal Care Hospital and Maternity, Abuja, Nigeria

<sup>9</sup>Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Rivers State University Teaching Hospital, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, South-South, Nigeria

**Abstract:** Persistent (repeated or long-term) use of aphrodisiacs among men is influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors. These determinants vary across settings but commonly reflect men’s perceptions of masculinity, sexual expectations, relationship dynamics, and health-seeking behaviors. Fear of sexual underperformance can drive continued use of aphrodisiacs as a coping mechanism. Men who perceive themselves as sexually inadequate may rely on aphrodisiacs to boost confidence. Work stress, financial stress, and family responsibilities can create psychological conditions that lead men to seek sexual enhancement substances. This study is aim to evaluate the Determinants of Persistent Aphrodisiac Use among Men in Urban Communities of South-South Nigeria. This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 men. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. The study lasted for a period of 2 months. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 25.0 and  $p < 0.05$  was significant. The results revealed that 72% of the participants have reduced self-esteem, 86% had erectile difficulties or declining sexual function, 75% had peer influence, 65% had relationship pressure, 75% had stigma around sexual dysfunction, 80% had limited access to sexual health services, 96% had health issues, 68% had habit formation and 85% said it was affordable and accessible. The study shows that persistent or repeated use of aphrodisiac substances is shaped by multiple interrelated factors and these determinants can be grouped into psychological, physical/health-related, sociocultural, economic, and behavioral factors.

**Keywords:** Determinants, Persistent, Aphrodisiac Use, Men, Urban Communities.

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### RESEARCH PAPER

**\*Corresponding Author:**

Gbaranor K. B.

Department of Human Physiology, College of Medical Sciences, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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## INTRODUCTION

Aphrodisiac substance could be drug, food or drink that increase libido, enhance sexual pleasure, induce and sustain erection thus leading to sexual satisfaction (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2025). Several people across the globe employ aphrodisiac substance to enhance their sexual performance and this has been a routine for them more especially, when meeting a new sexual partner for the first time (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2025). Erection is an important aspect of manhood that brings joy to every man who has attained puberty. Erection

could safe a man from committing suicide (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). Weak erection is interchangeably referring to as erectile dysfunction (ED) and is a common and serious health issue among men across the globe. The continual inability to achieve and sustain erection enough to allow full and excitable sexual intercourse is known as erectile dysfunction (ED). Erection is an important aspect of manhood and it brings joy to every man who has attained puberty. Erection can safe a man from committing suicide. Weak erection has become rampant among men and this is a global threat because it can lead to several

conditions (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). Studies report that men frequently use aphrodisiacs to address performance anxiety, low confidence, or fear of sexual inadequacy (Afolabi & Odu, 2020). Positive reinforcement from prior experiences may encourage habitual use. Research indicates that peer pressure, masculine norms, and societal expectations significantly influence sexual enhancement use (Mensah, 2019). In many communities, sexual stamina is equated with strength, prompting men to seek performance boosters. Affordable, easily accessible herbal aphrodisiacs available in markets or online contribute to their continuous use (Okoro *et al.*, 2021). Aggressive marketing and misinformation further reinforce demand. Underlying erectile difficulties, fatigue, chronic illnesses, or age-related sexual decline may cause men to self-medicate with aphrodisiacs rather than seek medical help (Ibrahim & Musa, 2018). Habit formation, risk-taking behavior, and co-use of substances such as alcohol can reinforce continuous aphrodisiac use (Kusi-Appiah, 2017). Overall, the literature suggests that the determinants are multidimensional, spanning psychological, cultural, economic, and health-related influences.

The constant use of aphrodisiac substances among men is becoming a growing public health concern. Many men rely on these substances without medical supervision, often driven by pressure to perform sexually, fear of inadequacy, misinformation, peer influence, or underlying sexual dysfunction. However, routine use may expose individuals to adverse effects, psychological dependence, and risky sexual behaviors.

Despite these implications, research on the determinants of persistent aphrodisiac use among men remains limited. This study therefore seeks to examine the psychological, sociocultural, economic, and health-related factors that influence the continuous use of aphrodisiac substances during sexual intercourse among men.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study involving 250 males. A well-structured questionnaire consisting of five sections including Demographic characteristics, Psychological factors, Sociocultural factors, Health-related factors and Patterns of aphrodisiac used and was administered to participants. The study lasted for a period of 2 months. Inclusion criteria were males between 18-47 years old. Exclusion criteria were those males that were above 47 years of age. Data were analyzed with SPSS version 25.0 and  $p < 0.05$  was significant.

## RESULTS

The results revealed that 72% of the participants have reduced self-esteem (Table 1), 86% had erectile difficulties or declining sexual function (Table 2), 75% had peer influence (Table 3), 65% had relationship pressure, 75% had stigma around sexual dysfunction, 80% had limited access to sexual health services, 96% had health issues (Table 4), 68% had habit formation (Table 5) and 85% said it was affordable and accessible.

**Table 1: Participants who have self-esteem**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have self-esteem	180	72.00
Participants who do not have self-esteem	70	28.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2: Participants who had erectile difficulties or declining sexual function**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who had erectile difficulties or declining sexual function	215	86.00
Participants who do not have erectile difficulties or declining sexual function	35	14.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3: Participants who had peer influence**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have self-esteem	187	75.00
Participants who do not have self-esteem	63	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 4: Participants who have health issues**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have health issues	240	96.00
Participants who do not have health issues	10	4.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5: Participants who have habit formation**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Participants who have habit formation	170	68.00
Participants who do not have habit formation	80	32.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## DISCUSSION

Aphrodisiac substances—both herbal and pharmaceutical—are commonly used by men to enhance sexual performance, libido, and stamina. In many societies, sexual ability is closely tied to identity, masculinity, self-esteem, and relationship expectations. As a result, some men engage in constant or habitual use of sexual enhancement substances despite potential health, psychological, and relational risks. Persistent use has been linked to anxiety, misperceptions about sexual norms, declining sexual function, peer influence, and easy access to unregulated aphrodisiacs. Despite the increasing popularity of these substances, there is limited empirical data on the underlying factors that influence their continuous use among men, particularly in settings where cultural expectations strongly emphasize sexual prowess. Understanding these determinants is essential for developing evidence-based sexual health education, counseling programs, and safer behavioral practices. The constant use of aphrodisiac substances among men is becoming a growing public health concern. Many men rely on these substances without medical supervision, often driven by pressure to perform sexually, fear of inadequacy, misinformation, peer influence, or underlying sexual dysfunction. However, routine use may expose individuals to adverse effects, psychological dependence, and risky sexual behaviors. Despite these implications, research on the determinants of persistent aphrodisiac use among men remains limited. However, psychological, sociocultural, economic, and health-related factors may influence the continuous use of aphrodisiac substances during sexual intercourse among men.

The findings indicate that psychological, sociocultural, and health-related factors significantly influence men's continuous use of aphrodisiac substances. Performance anxiety and fear of inadequacy emerged as strong psychological motivators. Cultural expectations of masculinity and peer influence also played major roles, consistent with findings by Mensah (2019) and Afolabi & Odu (2020).

The results revealed that majority 7(2%) of the participants have reduced self-esteem and men who perceive themselves as sexually inadequate may rely on aphrodisiacs to boost confidence leading to constant use of the substance. Again, many (86%) of the participants had erectile difficulties or declining sexual function and this underlying issues such as hormonal changes, fatigue, hypertension, diabetes and 96% of the participants had other health issues, or aging that may push men toward continuous aphrodisiac use rather than medical

evaluation. Also, several (75%) of the participants had peer influence. Friends or social groups that normalize or encourage aphrodisiac use may lead to sustained consumption. The study shows that majority (65%) of the participants had relationship pressure and expectations from partners or desire to satisfy a partner may motivate persistent use.

Also, many (75%) of the men had stigma around sexual dysfunction and when sexual weakness is stigmatized, men may avoid healthcare and instead turn to accessible aphrodisiacs to salvage their weakness. Most importantly, the study revealed that several (80%) of the participants had limited access to sexual health services and thus, men may rely on aphrodisiacs in contexts where sexual health services are scarce or expensive. Also, Cultural taboos or embarrassment may prevent men from discussing sexual problems with professionals, therefore rely on the use of aphrodisiac substance.

The also shows that many (68%) of the participants had habit formation and regular use, especially before sexual encounters may lead to psychological dependency. The study revealed that majority (85%) of the men aphrodisiac substance is affordable and accessible and because it is affordable and accessible, men got it cheap, over-the-counter, or locally prepared aphrodisiacs may be easily accessible, reinforcing repeated use. In many cultures, herbal or traditionally prepared aphrodisiacs are considered natural boosters of strength and virility. Also, aggressive promotion of “sexual performance enhancers” in media contributes to persistent demand.

Health-related factors such as undiagnosed sexual dysfunction further contributed to persistent use, suggesting that many men self-medicate instead of seeking medical evaluation. The accessibility and affordability of aphrodisiac products, as reported in similar studies (Okoro *et al.*, 2021), reinforced constant usage. Stress and Emotional Pressure such as work stress, financial stress, and family responsibilities can create psychological conditions that lead men to seek sexual enhancement substances. Overall, the study supports the view that aphrodisiac use is a multidimensional behavioral phenomenon influenced by personal, psychological, socio-cultural, and health system factors.

## CONCLUSION

Persistent aphrodisiac use among men is shaped by a complex interaction of psychological factors

(anxiety, confidence), social and cultural expectations (masculinity norms, peer influence), health-related issues (erectile difficulties), economic factors (access and affordability), and healthcare barriers. Understanding these determinants is essential for designing effective health education, counseling, and intervention programs.

Constant use of aphrodisiac substances during sexual intercourse is influenced by psychological factors (anxiety, low confidence), health issues (erectile difficulties), sociocultural pressures (masculinity norms, stigma), economic accessibility, lifestyle habits, and lack of sexual health services. These factors interact to reinforce ongoing dependence on sexual enhancement substances.

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