

[sg_popup id="59" event="onload"][/sg_popup]Creating a male birth control pill has been the subject of research for decades. However, results of a new study presented on Sunday, March 18th at the annual Endocrine Society meeting in Chicago, revealed that researchers have found a proposed hormone pill called dimethandrolone undecanoate or DMAU.

In the study, the pill was able to effectively reduce testosterone and other hormone levels responsible for sperm production without any serious side effects.

Dr. Stephanie Page, an endocrinologist at the University of Washington School of Medicine, and a lead author of the study said, "Our goal—and everyone's goal in their field—is to develop a method for men that has minimal side effects, and the holy grail would be to develop something that also has a health benefit for men."

The study followed 83 men between the ages of 18 and 50 for 28 days, who were randomly assigned to either a control group, or one of the three treatment groups. Each treatment group received a different dosage of the drug, either 100, 200, or 400 milligrams. On the first and last days of the study, each man provided blood samples so the researchers could determine hormone and cholesterol levels.

According to the study, the men who took the highest dose, 400 mg, revealed a significant suppression of testosterone levels, as well as the levels of two hormones required to produce sperm.

Normal testosterone in a man is anywhere from 350 to 1,100 nanograms per deciliter, and DMAU was able to bring it down to 13 nanograms per deciliter in the study.

These low testosterone levels are typically found only in prepubescent boys and girls—not adult men.

The scientists say these hormone responses is what would be needed for effective contraception, meaning that it could work as a successful male birth control pill.

All subjects passed every safety test, with very few reported symptoms traditionally linked to too much or too little testosterone. There were no reports of problems with sexual function and no mood changes either.

However, one consistent side effect reported was weight gain. Each man taking DMAU had gained extra weight and had lower levels of HDL cholesterol—the good kind.

This isn't the first experimental male contraceptive to have these side effects. In past studies, drugs like DMAU have two major problems—the oral testosterone they contain damages the liver, and the drugs leave the body too quickly. This means men would need to take the pills at least twice a day for them to be effective.

However, what makes DMAU different is the way the researchers addressed these issues. The dimethandrolone in DMAU is testosterone modified to eliminate liver toxicity. And the long-chain fatty acid undecanoate ensures the drug stays in the user's system for a full 24 hours.

There are a number of birth control options for women—hormone pills, injections, and intrauterine devices. However, men have very few options as of now.

“The only options currently available for men are vasectomy, condoms, and coitus interruptions. Forty percent of pregnancies worldwide are unplanned, so there's clearly an unmet need for novel contraceptives, and men have very few options,” Page said.

Considering the sample size of the study, there will need to be more research to better

evaluate potential side effects of the drug before it goes out to the general population.

However, this study brings us so much closer to creating another option for male birth control.

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Summary



Article Name

Male Birth Control Pill Shows Little Side Effects - Moving Closer To Reality

Description

A new study reveals that scientists have moved one step closer to producing a male birth control pill that can be used by the general population.