

What Is Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder (PGAD)?

What Is Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder (PGAD)?

Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder, also known as **PGAD** or **Restless Genital Syndrome** or **Persistent Genital Arousal Syndrome**, is a condition characterized by unrelenting, spontaneous and uncontrollable genital arousal in females. The condition may or may not include arousal with orgasm and/or genital engorgement. The patient's arousal is not linked to sexual desire.

PGAD has only recently been classed in medical literature as a distinct syndrome. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV does not recognize PGAD as a diagnosable medical condition. There are a growing number of reports describing a similar condition in males.

Some doctors class priapism in men as a type of Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder. Priapism is a persistent penile erection without sexual desire. Put simply, the male has an erection that does not go away. Treatments for priapism include drugs, drainage of blood from the penis, or anesthesia. Unlike PGAD, priapism is recognized as a diagnosable medical condition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV.

Persistent genital arousal disorder is not associated with hypersexuality, otherwise known as satyriasis in males or nymphomania in females.

It is very difficult to know how common PGAD is, because many sufferers may be too ashamed or embarrassed to seek medical help.

A sufferer of PGAD may experience episodes of intense arousal (without sexual desire) several times a day for weeks and even months. Climaxing (reaching orgasm) may alleviate symptoms for a while. However, in many cases the symptoms come back within a few hours. Symptoms come back suddenly and without warning - the patient cannot usually identify the triggers and avoid them.

If symptoms are ignored and not acted upon, the patient may experience waves of spontaneous orgasms. It is said to be a debilitating condition which can leave people unable to focus on everyday tasks.

There are some known triggers which can bring on symptoms, such as vibrations from a cellphone, or riding in a car, bus or train. Some people find that going to the toilet results in such severe arousal as to be painful.

Chronic (long-term) sufferers of persistent genital arousal disorder may eventually lose their sense of pleasure with all things sexual, because release from symptoms, which is achieved by having an orgasm, becomes associated with relief from pain rather than something to enjoy.

Prof. Sandra R. Leiblum

Prof. Sandra R. Leiblum (1943-2010), an American author, lecturer, and researcher in sexology, changed the name from Persistent Sexual Arousal Syndrome (PSAS) to Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder (PGAD), because it was felt the former term had an incorrect sexual connotation.