



**CASE STUDY:
BEST PRACTICES FOR FULLY INTEGRATING PENILE IMPLANTS INTO A SUCCESSFUL UROLOGY PRACTICE**

Executive Summary

What is the recipe for success to ensure a positive patient experience with penile implants? The formula is obviously a complex one, incorporating many factors. Understanding the perspectives of some of the most successful implanters can help other physicians wishing to strengthen their Erectile Dysfunction patient experiences and education with implantable penile prosthesis (IPPs).

Through understanding the importance of integrating IPPs, gaining the experience that leads to confidence and quality outcomes, and structuring of the practice you can begin building the foundation to successfully engage and educate your patients in your prosthetic urology practice. Learn how leading urologists manage their communication, patient experience and implement sustainability measures within their practices.

This case study explores the best practices for patient experience and engagement shared by eight of the nation's leading prosthetic urology practices. By identifying what and how to motivate patients and physicians in making decisions about erectile dysfunction (ED) treatment options, one may be able to gain an understanding of where patients are lost in the treatment pathway and develop a solid plan for patient education and engagement.

The strategies and best practices shared in this paper fall into five important categories:

1. Structuring the practice

Taking a team approach is crucial to creating the foundational structure of a practice that treats erectile dysfunction. This team is critical in developing the approach to treatment, establishing the patient relationship, and creating a comfortable environment. Learn how others have implemented a unique structure to their practice and how they have developed and defined their approach.

Another key element is developing the ability to properly identify appropriate IPP candidates. Hear from experienced implanters on the type of patients they feel are the best candidates. Learn key factors such as properly handling the post-radical prostatectomy patient and understanding the patient's underlying condition while considering his age and relationship status.

These critical elements help establish and create an environment that puts the practice in the right context to successfully treat and properly manage the patient with ED.

2. Communication

By properly handling the interactions and introductions such as the presentation, timing and level of information, you can establish an effective dialogue between physician and patient. Careful considerations need to be applied when discussing IPPs. The timing and choice of language used to introduce and discuss the implant can affect the feelings of the patient and his willingness to move forward with appropriate treatment options.

While effectively communicating with each unique patient, it is also important to communicate about the logistical side of the treatment process. Ensuring proper management of the insurance pre-certification and medical clearance process is critical, while keeping the patient in the loop every step of the way.

In conclusion, properly communicating with your patients can effectively drive optimal patient experiences, with the hopes of delivering the best treatment option for their unique situation.

3. Creating a Successful Patient Experience

We learn that these physicians believe a successful patient experience can be created by understanding the patient's sex life and motivation, getting his partner involved, letting others hear and share their story, and developing a follow-up strategy to keep patients engaged. It is also helpful to gain an understanding of the sexual lifestyle the patient is trying to achieve to help tailor your discussion and treatment options. Many physicians also assess whether the partner or significant other is involved in the decision making process.

To aid in the decision making process, many practices also establish patient ambassadors, those who have already been through an implant and are living with the device. Many find value in having patients connect with others who are living with an implant so that the candid questions can be asked and the realities of the device, from surgery to beyond, can be shared.

Perhaps most revealing is how follow-up and continued check-in with the patient throughout their treatment plan keeps them engaged and moving towards a solution that is right for them.

4. Establishing Credibility

By conducting patient and community education and outreach, and building a strong peer network, it was noted in this paper that you are more likely to be able to establish trustworthiness and utilize the tools you have set in place. It was also noted that education of a community/patient population positions you as an expert and can help further strengthen your practice. More than just occasionally hosting or speaking at events, your practice and future patients can benefit from these educational efforts.

Reaching out to colleagues also further connects you with the community and establishes credibility. Consider proctoring other urologists or visiting primary care offices in your area.

Several of the physicians stated there are ways to build a successful outreach model, and the key to success appears to be sustaining it over time.

5. Overcoming common barriers

Common barriers to penile implants such as penile length, complication, surgery and return to activity, as well as patient motivation can pose a challenge to the prosthetic urologist. Others note the most recent infection and complication data and develop an effective strategy for that conversation. These top performing implanters share how they manage common barriers.

Physicians can also misunderstand the motivation of the patient, thereby creating a barrier. Is it about sex or restoring their body? The bottom line is that it is critical to understand the patient's motivations and get to their real needs and desires.

Conclusion

Physicians wishing to take their patient education and engagement to the next level would do well to consider these best practices. Adopting a multi-faceted model with a focus on patient experience management may not guarantee successful outcomes, but it could have a positive impact on your patients.