

## Massage oil offers 'sexual healing' to women

August 09 2004 at 08:46AM

London - British experts are backing a massage oil that has a miraculous effect on women.

Zestra, which is made of plant extracts, is said to rekindle arousal in women who have lost the ability to enjoy sex.

Doctors have found it can even help women taking antidepressants and beta-blocker drugs or suffering from physical problems such as diabetes.

In these cases women often find it difficult or impossible to achieve full sexual satisfaction.

The oil, which can be applied to a woman's most intimate area by her partner, is on sale in chemist shops in Britain and could soon be available in some supermarkets.

Six applications cost \$25 (about R150), making it an expensive route to sexual bliss.

But its advocates say nothing else available works as well.

Psychotherapist Ruth Hallam-Jones, who treats women with sexual difficulties at the Porterbrook Clinic in Sheffield, said a number of her patients had responded positively to Zestra.

"We're very short of any physical treatments for women," she said. "I'm actively giving samples of this oil to women suffering from decreased responses, and it does seem to be helping them.



"Women are more complicated than men. When a man has difficulties getting an erection you try to improve stimulation and blood flow, but in women it's not so simple. I don't think we understand fully why Zestra works, but it does seem to improve sensitivity."

Dr David Edwards, a GP in Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, who specialises in treating sexual problems, said several of his patients had used Zestra with encouraging results.

One was post-menopausal, two were on antidepressants, and another was taking beta-blockers.

"I've found that Zestra increases arousal and speed to orgasm, and some of these women

haven't had an orgasm for a long time," he said.

"The beauty of it is that being an oil it's very easy to use and can be made a part of foreplay. It's less likely than other methods to put people off.

"Sexual difficulties cause broken relationships and divorce. It's very important that we take them seriously. I'd like to see a proper large-scale trial of Zestra."

Zestra contains, among other ingredients, starflower oil, evening primrose oil, extracts of angelica and coleus, and vitamins C and E.

Dr Edwards said it appeared to affect smooth muscle and cause blood vessels to dilate.

A small trial in America led by Zestra's inventor Martin Crosby, from Qualilife Pharmaceuticals in Charleston, South Carolina, tested the oil on 20 women aged 31 to 57.

Half suffered Female Sexual Arousal Disorder (FSAD) - an inability to reach orgasm that is said to affect up to 40 percent of women.

The results were published in the Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy last year. Interview assessments and diary entries showed sexual satisfaction response rates of 85 percent, even in women with FSAD.

Seven of the group who were taking antidepressants showed a response rate of 86 percent.

Three women reported mild burning sensations lasting five to 30 minutes. - Sapa-dpa