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Patients whose treatment plans included external-beam radiation therapy and/or permanent interstitial implantation for clinically localized prostate cancer were invited to participate in the study. Men were randomly assigned to one of two groups: the placebo arm or the cohort, which received a 50 mg daily dose of sildenafil citrate (Viagra®) during treatment and for six months after therapy. Participants were also asked to complete a set of questionnaires to assess their sexual function, which included questions about erectile function, orgasmic function, sexual desire, intercourse satisfaction, and overall satisfaction. Their feedback was recorded before the first radiation therapy treatment, and at six, 12, and 24 months after treatment.

“Men who received the drug showed significantly improved overall sexual function, including improved erectile function,” said [Dr. Michael Zelefsky](#), Vice Chair for Clinical Research Programs in Memorial Sloan Kettering’s Department of Radiation Oncology, and lead author of the study. “Results like this are important because they demonstrate that drug therapy used before and after radiation treatment may lessen the risk of impotence, a common side effect of radiation therapy. Future studies will be needed to further define the drug’s role and the optimal duration to prevent loss of sexual function after treatment.”

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