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with **Leah McClellan** Your Guide to One of Over 700 Sites

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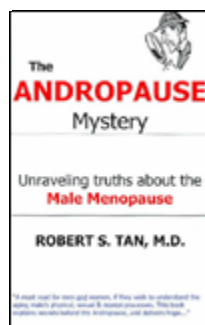
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The Andropause Mystery An Interview

With **Robert S. Tan, M.D.**

Part 3: Diagnosis And Treatment



Leah McClellan: How is a diagnosis of andropause made? Is a low testosterone level the only sign?

Dr. Tan: Clinical and biochemical hypogonadism is how I make a diagnosis of andropause. In other words, you have to have the symptoms and also have lowered levels of testosterone. By and large, I use the total testosterone level of below 280ng/dl. If I get in doubt, I use the free testosterone level. I also check other hormones to exclude rare pituitary tumors.

I am trying to find out through my research why some men are less likely to experience lowered testosterone levels. It may have a link to smoking, lack of exercise, and perhaps diet. I have found that obese men are also more likely to have a lower level of testosterone.

Leah McClellan: Can raising testosterone levels put a man at increased risk of prostate problems?

Dr. Tan: This is a very interesting question. Short-term

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trials have not shown testosterone replacement to have a direct link to prostate cancer. However, testosterone can make prostate cancer grow faster. Men should always have their prostate gland and [PSA level](#) checked before starting testosterone. It is also interesting to note that prostate cancer is a function of age. Young men with high levels of testosterone have very low incidences of prostate cancer, and it is in older men with low testosterone levels that prostate cancer becomes more common.

Leah McClellan: What are your recommendations about testosterone replacement therapy?

Dr. Tan: Options include oral, topical (on the skin), and injectable testosterone. The choice depends in part on costs and patient preferences. I prefer topical forms including the patch and gel because they more closely imitate the natural physiological process, but unfortunately they are more expensive than the injectable forms. In some countries there is an oral form of testosterone that is supposedly not toxic to the liver, but this is not available in the States as yet. Your doctor would have to monitor your PSA, blood count, cholesterol, and testosterone level after you have been started on the medication.

Leah McClellan: If a man thinks he may be experiencing symptoms of andropause, what type of doctor should he see?

Dr. Tan: There is no one specialty that monopolizes this field called "Aging Andrology." Most important is that the patient should be comfortable with his doctor. He could see a family physician, internist, endocrinologist, urologist, or a geriatrician like myself. Ask if the doctor is board-certified and if he is comfortable managing older men's issues.

Leah McClellan: Is there any way to prevent andropause or minimize the effects without medical intervention? What about diet, vitamin supplements, lifestyle, and fitness?

Dr. Tan: Yes, there is.

1. Exercise. Research has shown that you can have higher levels of testosterone, muscle mass, and bone mass when you exercise regularly. Also, you will have better cardiac conditioning when you exercise.
2. Eat well. Avoid too much fat and carbohydrates. Have lots of vegetables and fruit.
3. Rest well, and be mindful of sleep pattern changes as you age
4. Stop smoking and drink in moderation. My research has shown that smoking is a risk factor for an early andropause.
4. There are many supplements you can take and they are discussed in detail in my book: *The Andropause*

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5. Love and reward yourself, and learn to enjoy the aging process

[Learn more about Dr. Tan, explore his research on the andropause, and order his book, *The Andropause Mystery*.](#)

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