

DIAGNOSTICS

How Common Is Low Testosterone, Really?

2.1 percent. Or one man in five over sixty. Two respected studies of aging men landed more than ten times apart.

Swipe

THE TRAP

One Red Number Is Not a Verdict

If you've been handed a single low testosterone reading and told that's the diagnosis, you're statistically far more likely to be one of the many than one of the few.

THE STRICT ANSWER

2.1 Percent, by the Strict Definition

The European Male Ageing Study checked 2,966 men for low total AND free testosterone, plus at least three sexual symptoms together. Only then did it count 2.1 percent as truly low.

BY THE DECADE

Rare at 40, Still Rare at 70

0.1 percent at ages 40-49. 0.6 percent at 50-59. 3.2 percent at 60-69. 5.1 percent at 70-79. Even in the oldest group, about 95 in 100 men did not meet the definition.

THE LOOSE ANSWER

One in Five, One in Three, One in Two

The Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging asked a narrower question, level alone, no symptoms required: 20 percent of men over 60. 30 percent over 70. 50 percent over 80.

WHY THEY DISAGREE

A Lab Value Describes Your Blood. A Diagnosis Describes You.

One study counted a laboratory finding. The other counted an illness. Those are different populations, and the second is far smaller than the first.

WHAT'S ACTUALLY FALLING

Total and Free Testosterone Don't Fall at the Same Speed

Between 40 and 70, total testosterone falls roughly 0.4 percent a year. Free testosterone, the fraction that actually works, falls roughly 1.3 percent a year, more than three times faster.

THE BOTTOM LINE



Low Readings Are Common. The Diagnosis Is Not.

A number without symptoms isn't a diagnosis. Symptoms without a number aren't either. Only the two read together, by someone qualified to read them, settles it.