

## **REBUTTAL PLANNED TO PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY’S EFFORT TO MEDICALIZE “FEMALE SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION (FSD)”**

**The New View Campaign will send sexologists, physicians, therapists, and other activists to speak at FDA hearings on FSD October 27-28, 2014.**

New York, October 20, 2014. The effort to find a “pink Viagra” for women has repeatedly failed, though not for lack of industry effort. Pharmaceutical companies and their PR campaigns insist that a diverse set of problems lumped together as “female sexual dysfunction” or “hypoactive female sexual desire disorder” is a medical condition that lacks effective treatments. They describe mythical brain mechanisms, repeat exaggerated and discredited statistics, and blame a biased FDA for dragging its heels on approving drugs to help women. Media coverage has generally been uncritical.

On October 27 and 28, the FDA will hold a hearing in White Oak, MD, in which members of the public, as well as scientists, will testify about “female sexual dysfunction.” The focus will be on listening to patients and advocates and improving clinical trials for new drugs.

The New View Campaign, founded in 2000, is a feminist network of women’s health professionals and activists with diverse backgrounds—sex therapists, researchers, students, educators, psychotherapists, social psychologists, physicians, sociologists, and others. The Campaign will be sending speakers to support women’s right to sexual satisfaction, but to challenge the overmedicalized perspective on female sexual complaints and dissatisfactions.

- For most women with sexual complaints, the reasons are social, relational, and psychological and can’t be “fixed” with pills.
- The FDA is to be commended for its *nonsexist, pro-woman* determination to block approval of harmful and ineffective drugs. There is no “Viagra for women” because applicant drugs have failed the FDA’s standards of safety and effectiveness.
- The pharma/PR claim that “43% of all women” have a sexual dysfunction is spurious as is the claim that 1-in-10 American women have a biological lack of desire. Current research shows less than 10% of women have persistent distressing symptoms and no biological cause has ever been identified.
- Drug companies have been unscrupulous in pushing ineffective, potentially harmful drugs to market; starting “even the score” and “womensdeserve” campaigns that allege sexist bias and trivialize psychosocial perspectives; paying for medical “continuing education” programs (in which the education emphasizes new pharmaceuticals); and suppressing disconfirming studies.
- The FDA recently had the sense to issue warnings about the overprescription of testosterone for men; the same dangers of this hormone apply to women.

For more information, contact [newviewcampaign.org](http://newviewcampaign.org) and read the FACT SHEETS prepared for this 2014 meeting on <http://newviewcampaign.org/fdameeting2014.asp>

Leonore Tiefer, PhD, Psychologist, NYU Sch.Med, [newviewcampaign.org](http://newviewcampaign.org), [ltiefer@mindspring.com](mailto:ltiefer@mindspring.com)  
212.533.2774

Liz Canner, Filmmaker, “Orgasm, Inc.,” Astrea Media, [ElizabethCanner@yahoo.com](mailto:ElizabethCanner@yahoo.com), 617.733.8426

Karen Hicks, PhD, Health Educator, Lehigh University [karen@karenhicks.net](mailto:karen@karenhicks.net), 610.248.2768

Thea Cacchioni, PhD, Sociologist, Women’s Studies, Univ. of Victoria, [thea.cacchioni@gmail.com](mailto:thea.cacchioni@gmail.com),  
604.649.5116