

Carruthers M. Time for international action on treating testosterone deficiency syndrome. *Aging Male* 2009; 12: 21-28. (19509) Aim. Testosterone deficiency is having an increasing impact on men's health because of global aging, higher levels of obesity, diabetes and metabolic syndrome and adverse environmental factors such as stress xenoestrogens and anti-androgens. The question addressed is to what extent the large body of evidence on the benefits and safety of testosterone therapy is applied in clinical practice. Methods. Demographic data for men over the age of 50 from different regions of the world have been compared with the number of men in that age group estimated from sales figures to be receiving testosterone treatment. Results. On the basis of estimate that 20% of men over 50 in the general population of each region could be expected to have testosterone deficiency symptoms, on average only these men (0.69%) in most European countries were receiving treatment. Proportion was higher in the UK (1.00%) and Germany (1.89%), but lower in France (0.49%), Italy (0.51%) and Russia (0.54%). Interestingly, Australia had higher figures (1.64%), in spite of tight state control measures on androgen use. The USA has the highest treatment rate (7.96%) and this is increasing rapidly. If the basis for the diagnosis was the more conventional combination of symptoms plus biochemical evidence of low total and free testosterone levels, androgen deficiency would be expected in at least 5% of men over 50, and percentage treatment rates therefore four times higher. However, even on that basis, only in the USA do these exceed 10%. Conclusions. International action is urgently needed to raise awareness in the medical profession in the various countries of these remarkably low levels of testosterone treatment. Improvement in this requires education and motivation of doctors and those regulating the healthcare systems. A public awareness campaign is needed to educate men about the symptoms of testosterone deficiency and its impact on their health.