



MY BOTCHED PENILE ENLARGEMENT

BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER. A VICTIM OF AN ILLICIT
PENILE ENLARGEMENT CONFIDES IN **CHAN LI JIN**.

"I never considered myself 'small'. I have a good build and have always been an active sportsman since I was in school. Ever since I passed my 30th birthday few years ago, I maintained a strenuous exercise regime and watched my diet to stay fit.

I am passionate about bodybuilding and have worked in the fitness industry for over a decade. I enjoyed all kinds of exercise, from working on the machines to kickboxing to aerobics. I loved the light-headed feel whenever I finished a workout in full sweat.

Being fit and athletic, I've always been a strong advocate of healthy living. I counselled everyone I knew on the benefits of regular exercise and advised friends who smoked to stop. Since I became a father three years ago, I became even surer of myself, and where I was headed in life.

But all that changed a year ago when I made a rash decision to have a penile enlargement. Why did I do it? I guess I'll never know.

It all happened one fine day when my friends and I were working out at a gym in Kuala Lumpur. A fit-looking middle-aged man struck up a conversation with us as we shared jokes and gossip on political issues. Thinking he was one of our friend's acquaintances, we thought nothing of his intrusion.

As the conversation went on, he told us he worked as a bodyguard, but that he had a private homeopathy practice somewhere in Sungai Buluh. He then gave a quick glance around to check if the coast was clear before telling us in a lowered tone that he specialised in penile enlargements.

"It's very safe," he said, "using all natural products only. I've helped many men become stronger and bigger. Their wives even call me on the phone to thank me!"

We laughed when he said that, and someone ribbed him to tell us more of his 'success stories'. This seemingly innocent conversation ended as we switched topics to talk about something else. Yet, the seed of curiosity was planted in our minds that day.

I was at the same gym a week later when the same man appeared again. He waved to me enthusiastically and I walked across to talk to him. When I reached him, he leaned closer and asked if I was interested to try his penile enlargement therapy. "You won't regret it. It'll make you feel like a real man," he insisted.

He told me the entire treatment would only cost RM500 and would take a few minutes to complete. No surgery, bleeding or anaesthesia – I could even go back to work

the next day. "Here's a secret – many of your friends have already done it," he said, casually naming some of my close friends.

I remember thinking irritably to myself then that my friends had been selfishly keeping their secret of increased manhood to themselves. Well, I could do the same – and surprise my wife with the new me, I thought.

I went into the man's car and he brought me to a terrace house in a remote area. There was a woman and a young child there, which I assumed were his family. A family man too, just like me, I thought. That made me feel safe.

He took me to a 'treatment room' and told me to relax in a comfortable chair. Then he took out a box with several small vials. He explained that they contained a special combination of vitamin A and E that he had concocted himself.

Taking out a syringe, he administered several injections into my penis. I counted eight injections in total. He told me he normally only used three on other men, but because of my strong build, he would give me more, at no extra charge.

That night, I started feeling feverish. I tossed and turned the whole night, feeling ill. When I finally fell asleep it was almost dawn.

When I woke up the next morning, I was in for a rude shock. My penis was swollen, red and painful. Usually eight centimetres long it was now about 14 centimetres. The skin around it was stretched tight, making it difficult to fit into my regular pants.

Putting on a sarong, I rushed to my panel doctor immediately and related what transpired the day before. He was astonished to know I had done something so rash and gave me some injections to reduce the swelling. I was also given painkillers and antibiotics.

But nothing worked. For the next 12 months, I went from doctor to doctor and was given more injections and medications, but the damage had been done – my penis and scrotum remained oversized, hot and painful.

Sexual intercourse was still possible as I could still get an erection, but I've been avoiding sexual activity, as it's too painful and uncomfortable. I'm moody and irritable all the time, which is also not con-

ducive to romance.

My life is totally affected – I can't sit properly and have sold my motorcycle out of frustration. I even had to change my entire wardrobe, as I now wear big baggy clothes to hide the unnaturally large bulge at my groin. No more jeans or tights. Most times, I also wear a pouch in the front to hide my bulging genitals.

Many people ask: "But you wanted it to be big, right?" Yes and no. I would not mind if it was a little bigger, but not monstrous like this.

The effects are far-reaching. My job is affected, as I feel self-conscious all the time. Because of its abnormal size, people avoid coming near me thinking I have an erection. Male customers think I've changed sexual orientation while female customers just think I'm downright *gatal* (horny)!

Through it all, my wife has been very supportive and understanding. Although she hasn't complained, I feel very bad for not being able to fulfil my sexual responsibilities as a husband. She patiently advised me to keep searching for a solution, which finally made me decide to do a penile reconstruction.

I was recommended to a very good surgeon, who informed me of the risks involved. There will be scars and there's a possibility that some nerves might be affected, which could affect sexual function. There's also the possibility of becoming infertile, which saddens me, as I had wanted many children.

I have no one but myself to blame. The man who did the procedure for me never showed up at my gym again, but other friends have seen him at other gyms around the Klang Valley.

My main reason for sharing this story is to warn men out there to beware of such unscrupulous conmen who can destroy your life. My friends are also victims and are suffering, but to different degrees. Some were lucky to escape with only minor discomfort, but one friend's fiancée broke off the engagement because she felt he had turned into a freak.

I still don't know how this could happen to someone like me. I have no problems with self-esteem and was enjoying a good life, stable career and happy family life before I made that big mistake.

The lesson for every man here is: It could happen to you. Don't make the same mistake I did!

As of press time, the man in this story has successfully undergone a penile reconstruction and is now recovering. It is still too early to know if his genitals will function as before.

IT'S A GUY THING...

Most men are assuaged with needless anxiety about the size of their genitals. Some experts term it 'phallocentrism', while others simply call it 'phallic identity'. Both carry similar meaning – the natural tendency of men to seek identity, affirmation and confidence through the size of their penis.

The general conception is that bigger spells better vitality and superior sexual prowess. But whether women feel the same way is not entirely clear.

Most men have measured their penis privately at some point in their lives, usually during adolescence. This behaviour is believed to be closely linked to the 'Locker Room Syndrome', where teenage boys peep at each other's genitals to see if they measure up.

Extensive studies show the average penis length to be between eight to 10 centimetres long when flaccid and 12 to 15 centimetres when erect, with minor variations between Asians and Africans.

"Studies have shown that most men do not realise that they are within the average range in terms of length and girth, and some are still haunted by feelings of inadequacy. This has led many men to seek various kinds of penile enlargement or augmentation treatments, often from dubious sources which promise absolute confidentiality," says a plastic surgeon from Medicodental Aesthetic Center Springvale (MACS).

He adds, "Men who feel they need reassurance about their penis size should instead seek help from medical practitioners rather than trying unproven methods that could endanger them and their precious organ. Trained doctors would be able to perform a comprehensive medical assessment and provide sound treatment options with proven safety profiles."

Before treatment, initial assessment needs to be performed to determine treatment goals – whether for cosmetic or functional purposes. As of today, cosmetic procedures to enhance penile length and girth remain high-risk for what remains an essentially psychological problem.

Currently, penile enlargements are also not

approved by the Malaysian Association of Plastic, Aesthetic and Craniomaxillofacial Surgeons (MAPACS).

"I often advise patients to seek counsel from urologists, sexual health practitioners, plastic surgeons and psychologists before contemplating a penile enhancement. These experts will also be able to guide patients on how to satisfy their partner without necessarily resorting to plastic surgery," says the MACS plastic surgeon.

Unproven penile augmentation procedures often bring about complications such as infections, genital scarring, pubic hair loss, penile humps and deformities, decreased penile length, excessive skin on a low-hanging penis and loss of sensitivity at the head (glans penis). "In extreme cases, the patient may even risk the loss of the organ," cautions the plastic surgeon.

Amongst the most common penile augmentation treatments are fat injections into the penis, which are said to increase

these circumstances would be to establish trust and confidentiality. The last thing a patient needs is judgmental reactions, with the possibility of humiliation," the plastic surgeon stresses. Doctor-patient communication is also crucial, with the patient understanding that he may need more than one surgery to correct his deformities.

Reconstructive penile surgery can consist of several procedures, which include removal of injected material that has formed nodules and lumps, and subsequent repair with new tissue consisting of flaps and grafts. Additional procedures such as scar revision, removal of additional material such as residual foreign bodies or other procedures as medically indicated, would be necessary to achieve the best results.

The procedure usually takes about two to three hours, and the patient can recuperate at home after surgery.

Post-operative care includes bed rest for one week and avoiding strenuous physical



BEFORE



AFTER

THE PATIENT TWO WEEKS AFTER HIS RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY TO REMOVE THE FOREIGN INJECTED SUBSTANCE.

penile girth. As the injections can also include various unknown oils and substances, they can cause complications including disappearance of fat, development of penile lumps, penile shape distortion, excess penile skin near the glans and limited rigidity during erections.

More severe complications include impotence, urinary leakage and persistent pain. "Patients are also affected psychologically and emotionally, sometimes developing a distrust or despair with doctors after seeing no improvement or even a worsening of symptoms," adds the plastic surgeon.

Often, men see plastic surgeons to correct a botched augmentation or because their sexual organs have been damaged by burns, accidents, cancer and severe infections. This is when penile reconstruction is necessary to enable the patient to return to normal life.

"The first step a surgeon takes under

activities for at least two months after. Sexual activity can resume after three months or later when the patient feels comfortable enough with his reconstructed sexual organ.

Reconstruction can be costly, ranging between RM25,000 to RM30,000, depending on the complexity of the case. Yet, they amount to little when considering the impact, which includes restoration of self-esteem and normal activities.

Most importantly, men who require penile reconstruction need to pluck up the courage to seek treatment instead of suffering in silence for the rest of their lives. The MACS plastic surgeon stresses, "Penile reconstruction can improve function and bring back a person's confidence. Seek help from plastic surgeons registered with the Malaysian Association of Plastic, Aesthetic and Craniomaxillofacial Surgeons." 