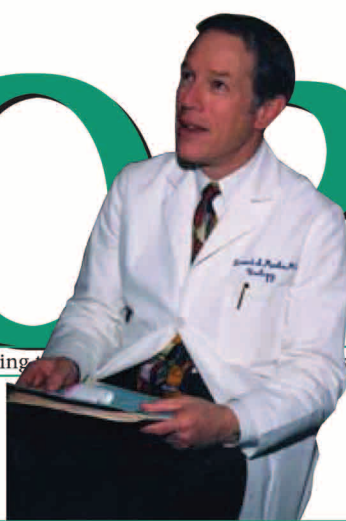


PEOPLE

Vol. 1, Issue 5 March, 2003 • serving the business and residential communities

“MALE MENOPAUSE”

Culver City doctor Leonard Marks, right, says Male Menopause is real and affects as many as half of all men over the age of 50. **Page 8**



Male Menopause No Joke to Local Doc

Dr. Leonard Marks brings little-recognized ailment to light through research

By Andrew Grossberg

A visit to the Internet site for the Urological Sciences Research Foundation (usrf.org) reveals a lot about Dr. Leonard Marks, the organization's founder:

It's scholarly, with articles on the latest research into prostate cancer. It's helpful, with information on new drugs.

And it's even lighthearted, with a section called "Urology's Lighter Side" (Viagra push-ups, boasts one link).

It's a combination of attributes the Culver City urologist uses to help patients deal with some uncomfortable topics. Things like prostate cancer and impotency.

"Men don't like going to the doctor, period," Marks said. "A lot of studies show men mostly go to the doctor when their wives make them. It's not a macho thing to go to the doctor."

Marks, who also works at Brotman Medical Center as well as operating a private practice, started the foundation to help raise awareness about urological diseases. And to get the word out that new treatments are available for men who might be suffering from an illness.

"The thing that makes me really different from other physicians is the research foundation," he said. "In the early 1990s, there was a sea change. There was the advent of drug therapy where only surgery had been available."

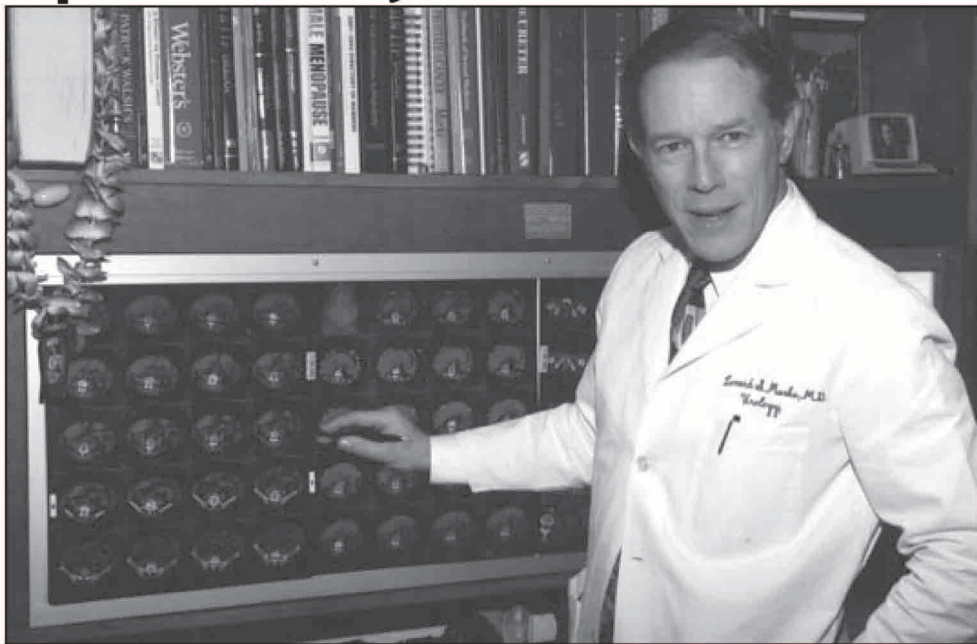
He noted one invasive procedure that involved using a rooter-type device that removed obstructions.

"A pill took that operation away," said the 58-year-old Marks. "Everything changed when new medications started coming out and there were medicines when previously there was only a surgical option."

Another area Marks has spent time working on is male menopause. If it sounds like a joke on a late-night television show, it isn't. In fact, it's very common. Its more appropriate name is androgen decline in the aging male, or ADAM.

Symptoms include diminished sexual desire and erectile dysfunction; mood changes, fatigue and depression; decreased lean body mass, muscle volume and strength; decreased body hair and bone mineral density; and increased fat in vital organs.

The good news is that it can be treated in most cases.



Culver City urologist Leonard Marks started a research foundation to explore issues of Male Menopause and educate the public.

PHOTO: CHRISTINA V. DAVIS

"It is estimated that half of all men in the last third of life develop it," Marks said. "Their testosterone levels are low, but it can be reversed by replacement therapy. There are plenty of men out there who have impotency, depression, mood disorders and all kinds of things that are treatable with testosterone."

Exactly how Marks wound up doing what he does was something of an accident. Well, at least he hadn't really planned it when he was receiving his masters degree in physiology.

"I'm a frustrated academic, clearly," he said. "I trained at UCLA in the 70s and would have stayed if there was an opportunity. I had the choice of leaving L.A. for another city or staying here and going into private practice. I don't come from a wealthy family and I needed the money. So I went into private practice. But I went with my head down because I always wanted an academic career. I always had the research bug."

In 1978, with offers from practices in Beverly Hills in his pocket, Marks instead decided to come to Culver City.

"There was a need here," he said.

"There wasn't an overabundance of physicians. But Culver City was not a desirable place. There were building that were derelict, transients sleeping in the gutters. It's always had a great city government, but it was more run down."

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-- Dr. Leonard Marks

Marks decision to eschew more upscale communities ultimately paid off. In the ensuing years, Culver City underwent something of a renaissance and Marks made a home for his practice in the Culver Medical Plaza on Hughes Avenue.

"It was a good choice and my practice thrived," he said. "I took one of the first offices and I never left."

Through the years, Marks has become a fixture of the community. And he feels a special kinship with the residents he encounters in his office.

"This is a wonderful community," he said. "The traditional doctor-patient relationship is more alive here than other places. First, it's the community and the

people themselves. This is Middle America. The people here are not Beverly Hills, they're not fancy people. They still have respect and appreciation for their physician."

In the early 1990s before he opened his nonprofit organization, Marks briefly thought about leaving the business. New therapies were changing the business and he wasn't sure what the future would bring.

"Patients were quite scarce in private practice," he said. "I thought of maybe going back to graduate school or moving to a smaller town, but my strength is I'm a good writer and I like research. And I really like the patients."

He started the Urological Sciences Research Foundation in 1992.

"I took \$10,000 and got an office and research nurse," he said. "It's a self sustained entity. It has its own employees and it's all separate from my practice."

For fun, the Texas native and resident of Pacific Palisades enjoys bike riding, jazz music and skiing. He's a married father of two grown children.

"I've made a nice home for myself in Culver City," he said. "I just try to be straight with people and treat them fairly. I have thousands of active charts in my office. My success story is one man's rediscovering himself and following his passion. I cannot wait to get to work in the morning."