

Bayer eyes sex drug for older women

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MONTREAL - German pharmaceutical giant Bayer signed a deal Tuesday with Quebec's EndoCeutics to develop a new treatment for post-menopausal women experiencing vaginal atrophy that can lead to sexual dysfunction.

The future treatment - provisionally dubbed Vaginorm - will boost the steroid DHEA in women's bodies; DHEA levels go lower naturally as people age.

In women's case, that can mean vaginal tissues change somewhat and become drier, which can lead to uncomfortable or painful sexual relations.

The deal covers the Phase III clinical development of the product and bringing it to market.

It could mean as much as 330 million dollars in research spending for Canada, the companies said in a statement.

With the baby boomer generation nearing retirement age, pharmaceutical companies are keen to find an illusive treatment for sexual dysfunction in older women to match the success of Viagra and other drugs for their male counterparts.

EndoCeutics said it hoped to improve the quality of life of some 360 million women worldwide aged 50 or older who it said have vaginal atrophy or dryness.