

Sexual Health in the Over Forty-Fives: A Cross-Europe Project

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Abstract : Background: Sexual health services and policies for middle-aged and older adults are underdeveloped, while global sexually transmitted infections in this age group are on the rise. The Interreg cross-Europe Sexual Health In Over 45s (SHIFT) project aims to increase participation in sexual health services and improve sexual health and wellbeing in people aged over 45, with an additional focus on disadvantaged groups. Methods: A two-pronged mixed-methodology is being used to develop a model for good service provision in sexual health for over 45s. (1) Following PRISMA-ScR guidelines, a scoping review is being conducted, using the databases PsychINFO, Web of Science, ERIC and PubMed. A key search strategy using terms around sexual health, good practice, over 45s and disadvantaged groups. The initial search for literature yielded 7914 results. (2) Surveys (n=1000) based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour are being administered across the UK, Belgium and Netherlands to explore current sexual health knowledge, awareness and attitudes. Expected results: It is expected that sexual health needs and potential gaps in service provision will be identified in order to inform good practice for sexual health services for the target population. Results of the scoping review are being analysed, while focus group and survey data is being gathered. Preliminary analysis of the survey data highlights barriers to access such as limited risk awareness and stigma. All data analysis will be completed by the time of the conference. Discussion: Findings will inform the development of a model to improve sexual health and wellbeing for among over 45s, a population which is often missed in sexual health policy improvement.

Keywords : adult health, disease prevention, health promotion, over 45s, sexual health

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