

## Sexuality and Quality of Life Among Older Adults

**Authors :** Ahuva Even-Zohar, Shoshi Werner

**Abstract :** Context: Sexuality is an important aspect of overall quality of life for individuals across different age groups and health conditions. Sexual interest and activity continue to be important and play a role in people's life as they age. Despite this, there is limited research on the sexual health of older adults. Research Aim: The study aims to examine the knowledge, attitudes, and sexual activity of older adults and to explore the relationship between sexual activity and quality of life among this population. Methodology: The study involved 203 Jewish participants from Israel, with an average age of 69.59. The participants completed questionnaires administered through an Internet panel. The questionnaires measured variables such as knowledge about and attitudes towards sexuality, sexual activity, quality of life, and socio-demographic information. Findings: The study found that a majority of the participants reported engaging in sexual activity, with most of them experiencing full sexual intercourse. Approximately half of the participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with their sexual activity. The results indicated that older adults demonstrated a moderate level of knowledge and permissive attitudes towards sexuality in later life. Moreover, higher levels of knowledge and permissive attitudes were associated with increased sexual activity. The frequency of sexual activity was identified as a predictor of quality of life, with a mediating effect on the relationship between attitudes towards older adults' sexuality and quality of life. Notably, men and older adults who were married or in a relationship reported higher frequencies of sexual activity compared to women and older adults without a partner. Furthermore, a majority of participants did not seek professional help or discuss their sexual concerns with a therapist. Theoretical Importance: This research contributes to our understanding of a topic that is often considered taboo - sexuality among older adults. It highlights that older adults maintain an interest in sexual activity, and that engaging in such activity contributes to their overall quality of life. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures: The data for this study were collected using structured questionnaires administered through an Internet panel. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions, allowing for quantitative data analysis. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were performed to examine the relationships between the variables. Questions Addressed: This study aimed to address the following questions: What is the level of knowledge and attitudes towards sexuality among older adults? How prevalent is sexual activity among older adults and what factors are associated with it? How does sexual activity impact the quality of life of older adults? Do older adults seek professional help for their sexual concerns? Conclusion: The main conclusion drawn from this research is that sexuality is a crucial aspect of older adults' lives and significantly contributes to their quality of life. The study emphasizes the need for educational programs aimed at older adults and professionals, which promote the understanding and benefits of sexuality in later life. It also suggests that professionals should actively encourage older individuals to seek help and support when experiencing difficulties related to sexuality.

**Keywords :** men, older adults, quality of life, sexuality, women

**Conference Title :** ICAPN 2024 : International Conference on Ageing, Psychology and Neuroscience

**Conference Location :** Phuket, Thailand

**Conference Dates :** February 26-27, 2024