

Johnson & Wales University

ScholarsArchive@JWU

Student Research Design & Innovation
Symposium

Community Research & Innovation Events

2024

Addressing Sexual Health Literacy for Older Adults

Riley David

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.jwu.edu/innov_symposium



Part of the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

Addressing sexual health literacy among older adults through educational programming.

RILEY DAVID, OT/S

FACULTY MENTOR: KATHRYN BURKE, OTR/L, OTD | SITE MENTOR: HALEY SANNER

Abstract

PIO: Does the use of educational programming/intervention improve sexual health literacy among older adults?

Sex is an activity of daily living that encompasses sexual activity, intimacy, sexual expression and much more. Occupational therapists can address participation in this area for all adult clients. Comprehensive educational programming for sexual health could promote safe and pleasurable participation in sex for older adults. The aim of this project is to investigate if program topics addressing safe sex, pleasure, positioning, changes related to aging, satisfaction and confidence could improve intimacy and quality of life for older adults.

Background

- When polled, 2/3 of older adults aged 65–80 years, said they were interested in sex. More than 50% said sex was important to their quality of life
- Incidence of STI's among individuals 55+ has consistently increased. In fact, rates have more than doubled over the last decade



(Malta, 2017)

Methods

Databases Searched:

- PubMed

Search Terms

- "older adults" or "aging" or "aged" or "seniors"
- "education" or "teaching"
- "sexual health" or "sexual behavior"
- "sexual behavior of sexual health"

Inclusion Criteria

- Older adults, LGBTQ+, sexual health/ behavior, education, age: 65+, peer reviewed, English, full text, within in last 10 years

Exclusion Criteria

- young adults, adolescents, under 65

Conclusions

- Sexuality and sexual function remain an important part of life as we age
- Age-related changes impact ability to engage in many sexual activities
- Ageist beliefs incorrectly assume that older adults are not interested in sex.
- Encouraging open discussion with providers is only the first step
- There is a need for older adults sexual health education and STI prevention campaigns

Next Steps

- Provide education for healthcare providers on sexual health for older adults including:
 - intimacy, pleasure, changes with aging
- Education on addressing older adult sexuality should be prioritized OT programs
 - CE courses for current OTPs
- Future research could examine how sexuality and relationships interact with different life phases
 - comparison between single vs partnered older adults

Contact Information

Riley David
rdavid02@wildcats.jwu.edu

RESULTS

Partner support and knowledge of spouse's sexual dysfunctions increased QOL

Types of desired intimacy vary, and impact relationship and sexual satisfaction
•gender differences occur

Older adults possess knowledge of general STI causes and symptoms
Education interventions impact the attitudes and knowledge of healthcare students and providers

Optimistic expectations of future sex life benefit both men & women
•Potential self-fulfilling prophecy
•gender differences

Stigma is a barrier to sexual health for both providers & older adults
•views of older adults as asexual
•clients are uncomfortable asking providers
•providers lack confidence in area

Transition to retirement has a significant effect on sexuality
•changing roles
•development of health limitations