

Age and gender-related prevalence of the desire for sexual intimacy in an ostomy population

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Introduction:

Satisfaction with sexual life is an independent, and a partner-dependent experience, while the desire for sexual intimacy is described as a biological force, and a cognitive experience¹. Collectively, experts agree that desire is a condition not necessarily reflected in an individual's actions. Within a population, strong or normal sexual desires for intimacy are associated with mixtures of emotion that are contextual; ranging from positive to negative. What is known is that the desire for sexual intimacy decreases as a population ages, and can differ by gender.

Objectives:

This study investigates age and gender-related prevalence of the desire for sexual intimacy in a population of adult ostomates from North America, the United Kingdom (UK), and Italy (n=4,097).

Methods:

The data is derived from the Ostomy Comprehensive Health and Life Assessment²: a validated and reliable survey distributed in North America, the UK, and Italy. The

instrument is a self reported multi-item survey querying major facets of the lives of persons having undergone ostomy surgery. The survey instrument consisting of 113 items has been assessed for construct and content validity, and overall reliability (Cronbach's alpha=0.84) of item-related responses.

Results:

Sexual satisfaction is shown to decrease as the individual ages. The degree to which decreases in sexual satisfaction in this population may be linked to partner or environmental influences is unknown. However, decreases in sexual desire associated with aging are commonly linked to lower levels of testosterone (there is no known minimal level of testosterone necessary to promote sexual desire).

The decrease in sexual desire is also influenced by factors such as gender (reported to be more severe in women than in men³), health, emotional status, and environment. While it was not the intent of this study to determine the impact of having a stoma on sexual satisfaction or sexual desire, it was the intent to demonstrate prevalence in the general population of ostomates.

The survey indicates 30% of ostomates are dissatisfied with their sexual life and 54% consider their desire for sexual intimacy to be weak or non-existent – this does not consider age or gender influence. Increasing age is shown to be a significant factor in decreasing sexual satisfaction, however the correlation is poor (-0.14 for males, and -0.08 for females), further emphasizing sexual satisfaction as a multitudinal force. Age and gender are shown to be significant factors in the decrease in desire for sexual intimacy: ranging from 14% in males less than 45 years old to 86% in females over the age of 74. The age-related correlation for males is $r=0.32$, and for females 0.36. A comparison between males and females indicates that for

age groups within the study, males are significantly less likely to self-report weak or no desire for sexual intimacy.

Conclusions:

Attempts to quantify sexual satisfaction and the desire for sexual intimacy, in a population of those that have undergone a life-changing event (such as ostomy surgery) must consider the psycho-socio aspects of the surgery, and the effects of gender and age as covariates. While it is convenient to excuse decreasing sexual desire in an ostomate population as a result of the many emotional and physical manifestations of having a stoma, the fact is that in an aging population sexual desire decreases.

Table 1: Satisfaction with Sexual Life.

Satisfaction with sexual life	Age categories (years)							
	≤44		45-64		65-74		≥75	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Satisfied/very satisfied	58.6%	59.9%	41.6%	44.6%	28.3%	47.2%	27.5%	24.7%
Neutral	18.0%	22.3%	25.4%	32.8%	33.4%	40.6%	41.6%	67.0%
Dissatisfied/ very dissatisfied	23.3%	17.8%	33.0%	22.6%	38.3%	12.2%	30.9%	8.2%
males: n = 1,402	margin of error = 2.62%							
females: n = 1,156	margin of error = 2.88%							

Figure 1: Decreasing sexual life satisfaction as a factor of age. Shown is the percentage of respondents indicating satisfaction with their sexual life.

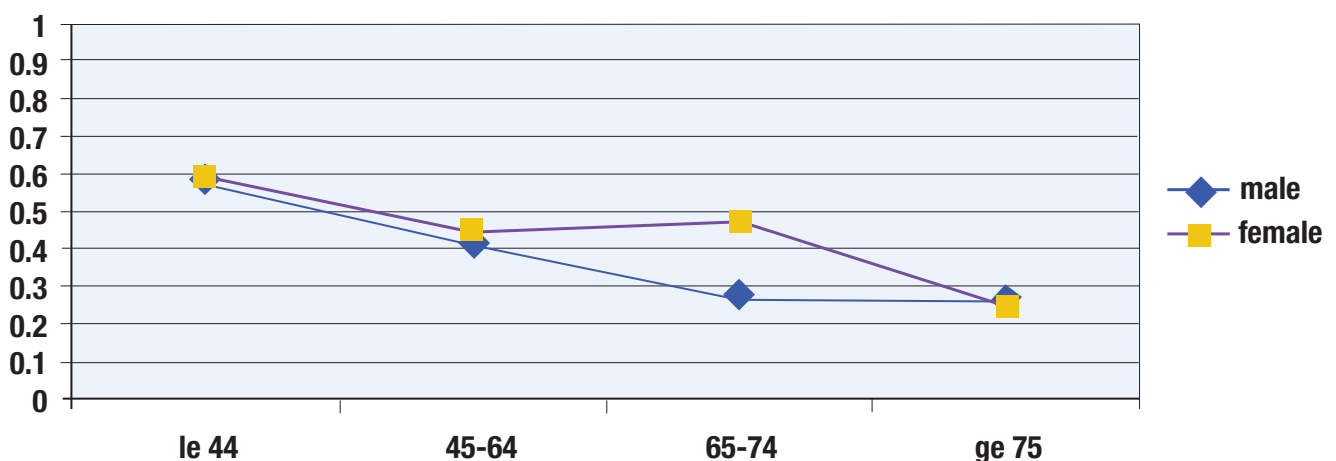
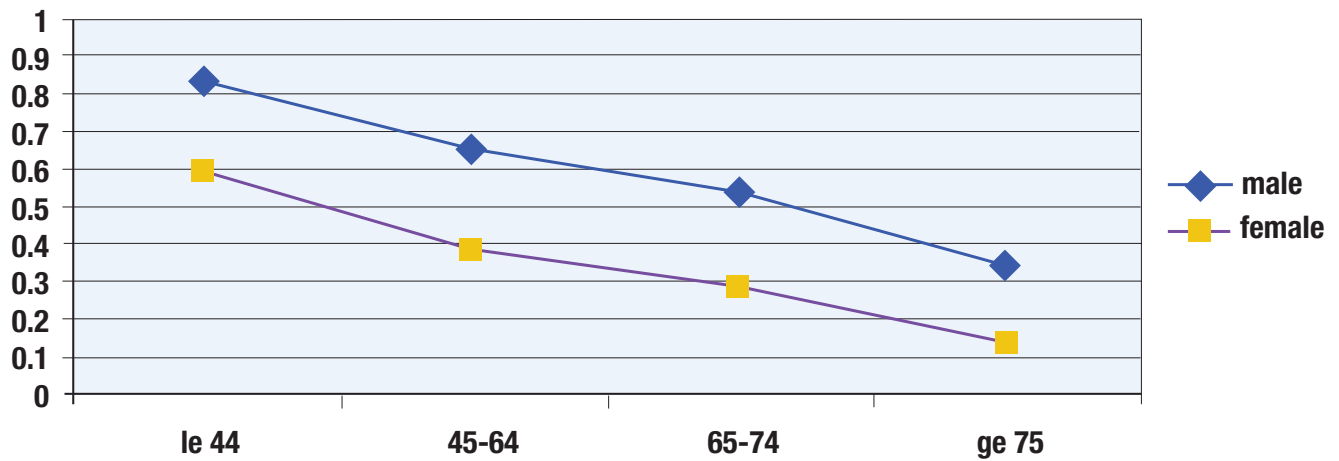


Table 2: Sexual desire by age, gender, and country.

Desire	Age categories (years)							
	≤44		45-64		65-74		≥75	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Desire (strong/normal)	83.7%	59.5%	64.8%	38.8%	54.3%	28.8%	33.8%	13.9%
Italy	63.5%	37.5%	82.3%	30.0%	62.0%	20.5%	37.5%	13.0%
North America	82.3%	59.9%	65.6%	40.0%	55.6%	37.0%	37.2%	24.4%
United Kingdom	89.8%	60.7%	57.4%	38.0%	48.5%	19.3%	29.1%	4.6%
Non-desire (weak/no desire)	14.3%	39.2%	36.5%	60.4%	47.0%	70.3%	68.5%	85.8%
Italy	37.5%	62.5%	17.2%	70.0%	38.0%	79.5%	62.5%	87.0%
North America	17.7%	40.1%	34.4%	60.0%	44.4%	63.0%	62.8%	75.6%
United Kingdom	11.2%	39.3%	42.6%	62.0%	51.5%	80.7%	70.9%	95.4%

males: n = 1,949 margin of error = 2.22%
 females: n = 1,850 margin of error = 2.28%

Figure 2: Decreasing sexual desire as a factor of age.
 Shown is the percentage of respondents indicating strong or normal levels of sexual desire.



References

- 1) Delamater J.D. and M. Sill. Sexual Desire in Later Life. The Journal of Sex Research. 2005. V42:(2).
- 2) The Hollister Ostomy Comprehensive Health and Life Assessment, Hollister Incorporated, Libertyville, Illinois, USA.
- 3) Meston C. Aging and Women's Sexuality. The Sexual Psychophysiology Laboratory. University of Texas at Austin; 2009.

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