



Talking to Men about Sex

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Introduction

We will discuss sex and men, in general, and 'talking to men about sex' in a medical Practice setting:

- Attitudes and Behaviours
- Demographics of Ageing
- Survey Findings
- Role of the Doctor
- How do we talk about sex in the consulting room?
- Options for Treatment

Libido, Desire and Self-image

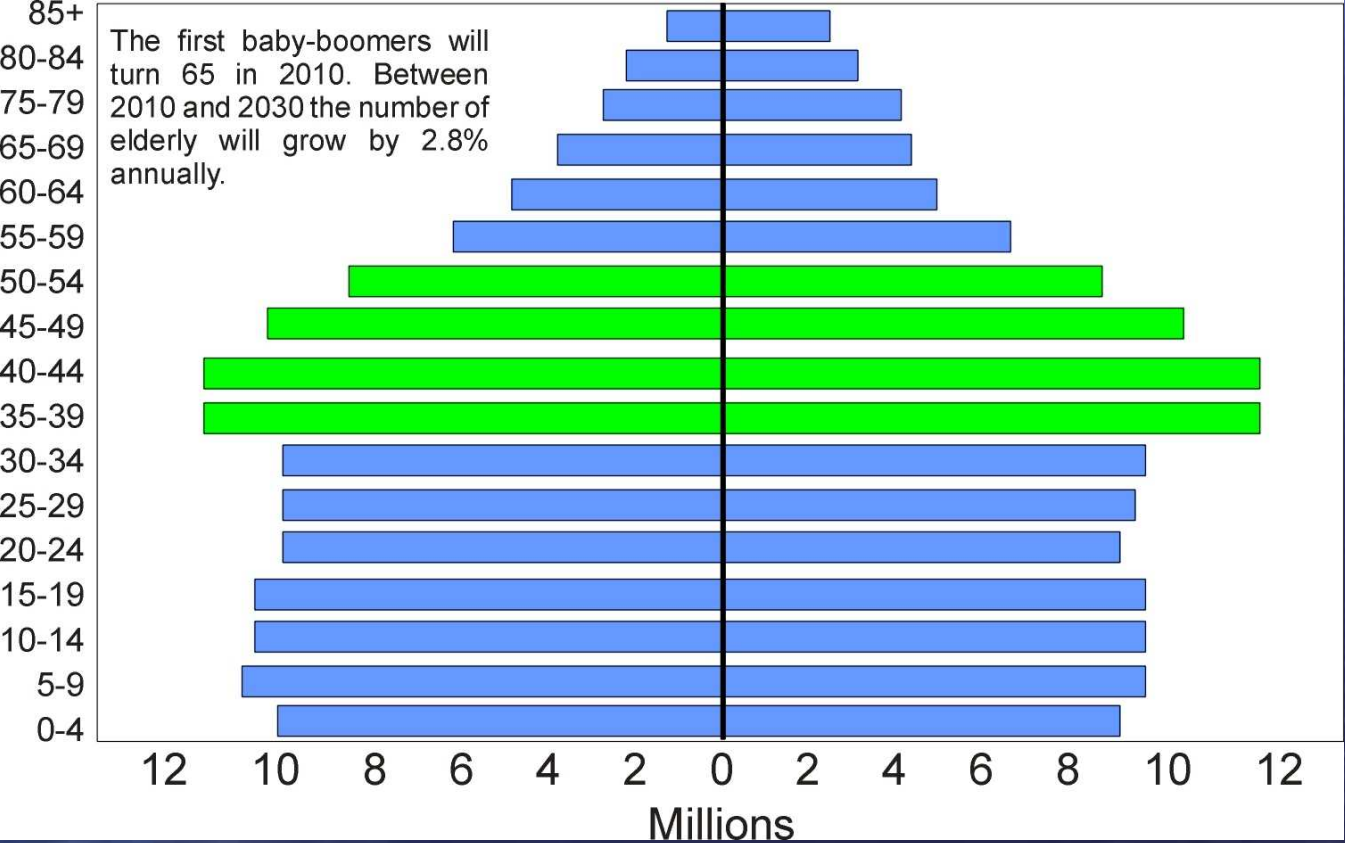
Men are driven sexually by male hormones, to have what we call 'libido'; they experience sexual desire, usually described in relation to an individual; and they have a mental view of themselves as sexual beings - their sexual self-image.

In my clinical experience older men, despite loss of both libido and desire, retain a strong sexual image of themselves and often welcome opportunities to maintain or recover sexual function.

The pharmacological means to do this have, I believe, significantly added to the sexual expectations of older men.

Population growth of 65 year olds

65+ Age Groups (USA) will Experience a Surge of Growth Starting in 2010



Male Attitudes to Sex:

Performance driven

Goal directed

Ejaculation oriented

Penis fixated

As little boys they say things, like: 'when Daddy dies I'm going to marry Mummy.'

Grown up they believe:

Men should take charge and be ready for 'it' anytime

Men don't have fantasies

Men are strong and don't show emotions

Old people are not sexual' (especially not our parents!)

Attitudes to Sex:

‘Men have sex to feel close; women get close to make Love’.
Is this true?

Are there biological differences between the sexes and, if so,
why?

The concept of ‘emotional literacy’

Studies of Sexual Lifestyles

- Kinsey: 1948; 1953
- Becker: US Consumers Guide, 1980
- NCOA survey, 1988
- AARP/Modern Maturity Sexuality Survey: 1999
- The Organon Sexuality and Well-being Survey in Women aged 50-60, 1991
- NatSal Survey: 1994

The Kinsey Report:

Kinsey A, Pomeroy W, Martin C. Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male. Saunders, 1948

Kinsey A, Pomeroy W, Martin C, Gebhard P. Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female, Saunders, 1953

The survey of Kinsey and colleagues in the 40's and 50's were ground-breaking and gave fresh insight into the varied nature of sexual lifestyles.

But:

Samples were mostly voluntary and from prisons, armed services, colleges and informed networks. Findings are not now considered representative

Survey: The US Consumer's Report Becker 1976

Survey population over age 50, termed by Becker

'The Silent Generation'. Report showed:

- Increased range of sexual activity with ageing
- Poor correlation of satisfaction/dysfunction
- Sexual activity declined in parallel with interest
- Importance of physical intimacy despite no SI

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) 1988

**Report on 1300 Americans over 60:
Sexually Active: 61% of men, 37% of women**

- **Satisfied with level of sexual activity 39%**
- **Men reported desire for more sex twice as often as women**
- **Sex more emotionally satisfying than aged 40 in 66%**
- **An active sex life important men 79% women 66%**
- **Qualities sought in a partner: 90% cited high moral character, pleasant personality, humour and intelligence. Men>women cited sex; women>men cited financial security**

Studies of Sexual Lifestyles

NatSal Survey, 1994

Survey population < 50 years, showed:

- Sexual activity dependent on having a partner**
- Duration of relationship inversely related to level of sexual activity.**

AARP/Modern Maturity Sexuality Survey (1999)

Objective of Report was to understand how sex affects the quality of life and the effects of drugs (eg sildenafil) on sexual satisfaction

- Quality of interpersonal relationships rated more highly than good sexual relationships**
- A generation gap was reported in attitudes to sexuality: the new old will be less accepting of abstinence**

A theme in survey findings

In response to the question:

Q: 'What are the qualities of a good relationship?' In order of importance:

- Security
- Companionship
- Fidelity
- Sex

Sex in 1950's and 70's was rated as less important than qualities 1-3

Men consistently rated sex more highly than women

'Baby Boomers' in 2006

(The present 50-60 age group)

The 'Me' Generation

- Greater financial security – 'Grey Power'
- Increased life expectancy and health
- Improved jobs market for older people
- Prolonged potency and libido (PDE5 inhibitors, HRT)
- Altered expectations of relationships
- New culture of late life dating and relating

'Baby Boomers Popular Message'

There are lots of us;
We value sex more than in the past;
Age effects our sex lives and if there is
Viagra we'll buy it, off the internet;
We travel and enjoy living.

Research on the sex lives of older people:

- In reality there is a lack of studies and hence lack of knowledge about sexual behaviour in older people.
- The latest AIDS epidemic update from WHO is restricted to 15-49 year olds

HIV risk behaviour in older people

Swiss study of 850 males aged 46-65:

- HIV +ve 15%
- New partner in previous 2 years, 12%
cf 20% of 31-45 year olds
- Occasional contact (9 people) 6%
cf 7 people for 10% of 31-45 year olds
- Sex rated 'rather' or 'very' important 75%
- 'Parallel relationship' 24% Abel 2002

Role Changes for Men/Women under 50

Role changes consequent to changing socio-economics:

- Contraception
- HIV
- Career women
- Greater financial independence
- Later childbirth

Role of the Doctor in sex matters:

- Diagnostician
- Educator
- Permission giver
- Boundary setter
- Mediator

But... the Doctor has become a functionary of the State.
Where is his/her primary allegiance, State or patient?



How do we talk about sex in the consulting room?

The Assessment Interview

- The 'Going out of the door' remark
- Ring fence assessment time
- Structured v semi-structured interviewing
- Active Listening
- The Leading question
- Language!
- Non-verbal stuff (the doctor...the patient)
- 'Why now?'

Approaches to therapy:

- Person-centred Therapy
- Masters and Johnson: Sensate Focus therapy
- Lo Piccolo: PLISSIT model of therapy
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Qualities of a 'Good' Therapist

Also the qualities of 'the fully functioning' person:

- Empathy
- Genuineness
- Non-possessive warmth

Emphasises, for the purpose of therapy, who we are and the nature of the relationship with our client.

Carl Rogers: Person-centred therapy

Sensate Focus Therapy

Sensate focus is a series of specific exercises for couples which encourages each partner to take turns paying increased attention to their own senses.

These exercises were originally developed by Masters and Johnson to assist couples experiencing sexual problems, but can be used for variety and to heighten personal awareness with any couple.



LoPiccolo's Psychosexual Treatment Model:

Permission

Limited Information

Specific Suggestions

Intensive Therapy

Jack Annon, "Behavioral Treatment of Sexual Problems", 2 vols., Harper & Row - Medical Department, 1976

The Extending practice of Sexology

In recent years the reach of sexology has extended to gender issues, sexual addiction and 'cybersex'.

General Medical Practice

General Medical Practice remains a very good place to initiate medical and psychological exploration of sexuality.