

Cognitive-Affective Factors and Women's Orgasm Difficulties: A Comparative Study

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Introduction & Objectives: Cognitive-affective factors including sexual beliefs, automatic thoughts, and affect, as well as individual propensity for sexual inhibition and excitation, have been shown to be involved in female orgasmic response. However, most previous studies have only included non-clinical samples and there is yet a need to compare how women with and without orgasm difficulties differ regarding these variables.

Method(s) & Sample: Two groups, comprised of 250 women with orgasm difficulties and 250 without ($N = 500$), matched for sociodemographic variables (e.g., age), completed a questionnaire protocol assessing sexual inhibition and sexual excitation (Sexual Inhibition/Sexual Excitation Scales – Short Form), sexual beliefs (Sexual Dysfunctional Beliefs Questionnaire), negative automatic thoughts (Automatic Thoughts subscale of the Sexual Modes Questionnaire), and affect (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) experienced during sexual activity. Multivariate Analyses of Variance were ran for each set of variables.

Results: Compared to women without orgasm difficulties, women who reported orgasm difficulties scored

higher on sexual inhibition related to fear of performance failure and sexual excitation [$V = 0.70$, $F(3, 480) = 12.0$, $p < .001$], as well as on age related beliefs [$F(1, 497) = 5.73$, $p = .017$]. Moreover, women with orgasmic difficulties reported significantly more negative automatic thoughts [$V = 0.15$, $F(6, 490) = 14.7$, $p < .001$] (e.g., failure and disengagement, low self body image, sexual abuse, lack of erotic content, lack of partner's affection, and one's passivity) and lower positive affect during sexual activity [$V = 0.11$, $F(2, 485) = 28.4$, $p < .001$].

Conclusion & Recommendations: These results are in line with cognitive-affective models of sexual dysfunction, while suggesting that specific cognitive-affective factors are involved in female orgasm difficulties. Nonetheless, the novel findings of this study highlight attentional focus and sexual inhibition as potential targets for interventions aimed at orgasm difficulties.

Keywords: female orgasmic problems, cognitive-affective factors, sexual inhibition and excitation

Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Statement: None

Psychosexual Factors that Influence Sexual and Relationship Satisfaction of People with Physical Disabilities

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Introduction & Objectives: Sexually dysfunctional beliefs, as well as an individual tendency for sexual inhibition, seem to play a role in the development of sexual problems. However, little is known about its role in the sexual health of people with physical disabilities. This study aimed to analyse how sexual beliefs and sexual inhibition help explain sexual and relationship satisfaction in people with and without physical disabilities.

Method(s) & Sample: A sample of 479 participants (61% were women), aged between 18 and 55 years old, participated in the study. Of these, 189 individuals had a self-reported physical disability and the majority (70.1%) were motor or neuromuscular health conditions (e.g. spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy). Participants filled in several questionnaires about sexual functioning beliefs, sexual inhibition/excitation propensity, sexual and relationship satisfaction, sociodemographic and disability characteristics.

Hierarchical multiple regressions were computed in order to test the hypotheses. Also, moderating effects of physical condition or gender between independent and dependent variables were explored.

Results: Results showed that, after controlling for age, ageing beliefs predicted a decreased sexual and relationship satisfaction, regardless of the existence of physical disability. Sexual inhibition related to performance failure also predicted decreased sexual satisfaction, and sexual excitation was associated with less sexual and relationship satisfaction. No moderating effects were found.

Conclusion & Recommendations: Findings suggest that dysfunctional beliefs about the ageing body, and an individual tendency for sexual inhibition when anticipating performance failure, may act as

vulnerability factors of sexual adjustment in the face of physical disability and/or negative sexual events. Interestingly, sexual excitation proneness may entail a regulatory role of expectations about sexual encounters. This study brings implications for clinical practice and paves the way to understand the mechanisms in which psychosexual factors may interfere in the sexual health of people with physical disabilities.

Keywords: physical disabilities, sexual cognitions, sexual satisfaction

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The Influence of Mindfulness, Self-Compassion and Acceptance on Sexual and Relationship Satisfaction of People with Physical Disabilities

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Introduction & Objectives: Research on Third Wave Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy has shown the role of variables such as mindfulness and self-compassion in promoting resilience while living with a disabling condition. However, little is known on the influence of these variables on sexual and relationship satisfaction of people with physical disabilities. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the contribution of mindfulness, self-compassion and acceptance in explaining perceived sexual and relationship satisfaction, in people with and without physical disabilities.

Method(s) & Sample: A sample of 479 participants, aged between 18 and 55 years old, participated in the study (61% were women). Of these, 189 participants had a self-reported physical disability, the majority (70.1%) being related to motor or neuromuscular health conditions (e.g. spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, amputation). Participants took part in a survey about psychological, sexual and relationship information, as well as sociodemographic and disability-related data. A series of hierarchical multiple regressions were computed in order to test the hypotheses. Moreover, possible moderating effects of physical

condition or gender between independent and dependent variables were examined.

Results: After controlling for age, results showed that higher levels of mindfulness, self-compassion and acceptance significantly predicted higher sexual and relationship satisfaction, above and beyond the physical condition of the participants. Additionally, results indicated that gender was a moderator for the relationship between the non-judge facet of mindfulness and sexual satisfaction, as this association was only significant for women. Likewise, the association between the self-judgment dimension of self-compassion and sexual satisfaction was stronger for women than for men.

Conclusion & Recommendations: Findings suggest that Third Wave Cognitive-Behavioural dimensions may help to understand sexual and relationship satisfaction in individuals with and without physical disabilities. Interventions based on mindfulness and self-compassion techniques might be helpful to improve sexual adjustment in people with physical disabilities.

Keywords: physical disabilities, sexual satisfaction, third-wave CBT