Stroke and sexual health: A systematic review of psychological interventions aimed at improving sexual health of stroke survivors

Citation

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Review question

What are the main non-pharmacological interventions on sexual health for stroke survivors documented in the literature, and their main findings?

- Are there any digital interventions? If so, what are their characteristics?

Searches

MEDLINE (PubMed), Web of Science, EBSCO (APA PsycINFO and APA PsycArticles) and Cochrane

Types of study to be included

Both qualitative and quantitative studies will be included.

Condition or domain being studied

This review will be focused on the sexuality of people who suffered a stroke. A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is interrupted or reduced (ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke), preventing brain tissue from getting oxygen and nutrients. This results in brain damage and may even lead to death. When people survive, usually they present some degree of physical or cognitive impairment. Sexual lives usually change, and sexual dysfunction may be experienced as a consequence of medication and treatment effects. It is common to experience emotional and mood changes that impact on sexual desire, and relationships are often challenged.

Participants/population

Studies where the sample is composed by men and/or women (18 years +) who had stroke.

Intervention(s), exposure(s)

Interventions will be included if they are designed to address sexual health of stroke survivors. Studies that examine outcomes arising from the interventions, and experiences of non-pharmacological interventions will be included. Both traditional and digital interventions, in all its formats (mobile, desktop, etc.) will be included. Studies must be original publications published in English. Grey literature will be excluded.

Comparator(s)/control

Where applicable, a control sample of men and women (18 years +) who had never had stroke.

Context

All study settings will be included.

Main outcome(s)

Outcomes related to sexuality, namely sexual function (e.g., FSFI, IIEF, GRISS) or sexual satisfaction (e.g., GMSEX, DAS), will be included in order to assess the interventions efficacy. If applicable, for qualitative studies, we will conduct a narrative synthesis on the perceptions and themes that emerged in each study.

Measures of effect

Once analyses involve sexual health indicators (e.g. sexual function, sexual activities, sexual satisfaction) (e.g. general cognitive functioning, memory, attention), all analytical procedures will be included.

Additional outcome(s)

Number of participants, characteristics of interventions.

Measures of effect

Not applicable.

Data extraction (selection and coding)

Search results from each source will be synchronized into Rayyan platform, so that all members of the team are able to follow the process. Firstly, all the duplicates will be automatically removed. In a first round of screening the title and abstract of each article will be examined against review eligibility criteria. Once the initial screening is complete, the number of potentially relevant articles will be recorded. This is the number of articles you obtain in preparation for full-text screening. In a second round of screening, the full text of potentially relevant articles will be assessed against the same eligibility criteria. The final step is to assess the reports for eligibility based on the full-text screening. Only the articles that meet the eligibility criteria will be included in the review. All stages of searching and study selection will be performed by a single author (RB), who will seek advice and clarification from the co-authors (AG, PV, RP and PN) as required. Based on the Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions (Higgins et al., 2019) a data extraction form including author(s), year of publication, journal, country, study design, study sample, type of intervention, outcomes and main findings will be used to extract data from the included studies. Additional fields may be added as required by the review progress. Missing data will be requested from study authors.

Risk of bias (quality) assessment

For quantitative studies, the risk of bias in non-randomized studies will be evaluated by using the ROBINS-I. For assessing risk of bias in randomized controlled trials, the Cochrane Collaboration's Risk of Bias Tool will be applied. As for qualitative studies, the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist for Qualitative Research will be used for evaluating the risk of bias. The assessment of the risk of bias assessment will only be performed if the number of studies is sufficient for comparing the results between the studies.

Strategy for data synthesis

A narrative synthesis of the findings from the selected studies will be structured around type of intervention, contents and outcomes. We anticipate that there will be limited scope for meta-analysis, due to the range of different outcome measures and the small number of trials. However, if we find enough studies using the same type of outcome measures,

we will pool the results.

Analysis of subgroups or subsets

If possible, data will be grouped according to type of intervention (e.g., traditional, digital) or according to the type of intervention that was implemented (e.g. cognitive-behavioral therapy, third-wave psychotherapy, psychoeducational intervention).

Contact details for further information

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Organisational affiliation of the review

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Review team members and their organisational affiliations [1 change]

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Type and method of review

Systematic review

Anticipated or actual start date

08 January 2023

Anticipated completion date [1 change]

10 December 2023

Funding sources/sponsors

Active and Assisted Living Programme (AAL)

Grant number(s)

State the funder, grant or award number and the date of award

aal/0005/2020

Conflicts of interest

Language

English

Country

Portugal

Stage of review [1 change]

Review Completed not published

Subject index terms status

Subject indexing assigned by CRD

Subject index terms

Humans; Psychosocial Intervention; Sexual Health; Stroke; Survivors

Date of registration in PROSPERO

04 June 2023

Date of first submission

24 May 2023

Stage of review at time of this submission [1 change]

Stage	Started	Completed
Preliminary searches	Yes	Yes
Piloting of the study selection process	Yes	Yes
Formal screening of search results against eligibility criteria	Yes	Yes
Data extraction	Yes	Yes
Risk of bias (quality) assessment	Yes	Yes
Data analysis	Yes	Yes

Revision note

Studies that examined outcomes arising from the interventions, and experiences of non-pharmacological interventions, with a discernible psychological component were included. The Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal Checklist for

Analytical Cross Sectional Studie was also used for assessing risk of bias in cross-sectional studies.

The record owner confirms that the information they have supplied for this submission is accurate and complete and they understand that deliberate provision of inaccurate information or omission of data may be construed as scientific misconduct.

The record owner confirms that they will update the status of the review when it is completed and will add publication details in due course.

Versions

04 June 2023

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08 December 2023