

**Men, Women and Ageing**

**Sexual activity in men and women aged 82-87 years in Western Australia**

Leon Flicker, Kieran McCaul, Zoe Hyde, Osvaldo Almeida, Graeme Hankey, Konrad Jamrozik, Julie Byles, Deirdre McLaughlin, Annette Dobson

WA Centre for Health & Ageing, CMR, WAIMR, UWA  
Schools of Psychiatry & Clinical Neurosciences, and Medicine & Pharmacology, UWA  
Departments of Neurology, Geriatric Medicine & Psychiatry, Royal Perth Hospital  
School of Population Health & Clinical Practice, University of Adelaide  
Research Centre for Gender, Health and Ageing, University of Newcastle  
School of Population Health, University of Queensland  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA School of Population Health  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**  
**A population-based survey of sexual activity, sexual problems and associated help-seeking behavior patterns in mature adults in the United States of America**

EO Laumann<sup>1</sup>, DB Glasser<sup>2</sup>, RCS Neves<sup>3</sup> and ED Moreira Jr<sup>3</sup>, for the GSSAB Investigators' Group

"To study sexual activity, the prevalence of sexual dysfunction and related help-seeking behaviors among **mature** adults in the United States of America, a telephone survey was conducted in 2001–2002. A total of 1491 individuals (742 men/749 women) aged **40–80 years** completed the survey."

Clearly people over the age of 80 years are no longer mature and have no interest in sex

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**Sexual difficulties and help-seeking among mature adults in Australia: results from the Global Study of Sexual Attitudes and Behaviours**

Edson D. Moreira Jr<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Dale B. Glasser<sup>4</sup>, Rosie King<sup>5</sup>, Fernanda Gross Duarte<sup>6</sup>, Clive Gingell<sup>7</sup> and for the GSSAB Investigators' Group  
*Sexual Health, 2008, 5, 227–234*

A total of 1500 individuals (750 men and 750 women) aged 40 to 80 years completed the survey. (Overall response rate of 16.9% Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATIs)) The questionnaire covered demographic information, overall health, and sexual behaviors, attitudes and beliefs.

	Men (n = 750)	Women (n = 750)
<b>Age group (years)</b>		
40–49	39.4	40.0
50–59	29.9	31.9
60–69	18.6	17.6
70–80	12.1	10.5
<b>Intercourse in the past 12 months</b>		
40–49	93.6	90.2
50–59	85.7	77.9
60–69	79.1	57.3
70–80	48.9	24.4

EM, RK, CG work as consultants for Pfizer. DBG is employed by Pfizer Inc.  
The Global Study of Sexual Attitudes and Behaviours was funded by Pfizer Inc.

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**Sexual Activity, Erectile Dysfunction and Their Correlates among 1,566 Older Chinese Men in Southern China**

Samuel Yeung Shan Wong, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRACGP,\* Jason Chi Shun Leung, MSc,<sup>†</sup> and Jean Woo, MB BChir, MD, FRCP, FRACP, FFPH<sup>‡</sup>

\*Department of Community and Family Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; <sup>†</sup>Jockey Club Centre for Osteoporosis Care and Control, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; <sup>‡</sup>Department of Medicine and Therapeutics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

- Mean age (SD) 75.5 (4.7) years
- Only 30.7% of men were sexually active in the previous 6 months
- Being sexually inactive in the previous 6 months was associated with being older, OR = 1.80; (CI: 1.56–2.09), single, OR = 1.87; (CI: 1.19–2.94) presence of peripheral arterial disease OR = 2.43; (CI: 1.25–4.71)

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Lindau et al A study of sexuality and health among older adults in the US. NEJM 2007 357:762

- The National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP) to provide data on the sexual activity, behaviors, and problems of older adults
- 4017 eligible persons 57 to 85 years of age , 3005 (1550 women and 1455 men) were successfully interviewed, yielding an unweighted response rate of 74.8% and a weighted response rate of 75.5%. (weighted more to the older age group)

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**A:** The percentage of survey respondents who were sexually active in the previous year.

**B:** shows the percentage of survey respondents who were in a spousal or other intimate relationship.

**C:** shows the percentage of respondents who were sexually active in the previous year among those with a spousal or other intimate relationship.

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### What about Australian Data?


#### The Men, Women & Ageing Study (MWA)

- Two population-based longitudinal studies that began in 1996: the Health in Men Study (HIMS) and the older cohort from the Australian Longitudinal Study of Women's Health (ALSWH).
- The ALSWH cohort was drawn from Australia's universal health insurance scheme (Medicare) in 1996.
- Eligible women were aged 70-75 years, and were resident in metropolitan and rural areas throughout Australia. The response fraction was 37%.
- Now currently in 5<sup>th</sup> wave – decided against sex questions.
- For women resident in Perth metropolitan area they completed additional questions including sex (n = 164)

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### HIMS

- WA randomized controlled trial of screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms 1996-1998 (Norman, Jamrozik, Lawrence-Brown, Dickinson)
- Randomized to Screen group Men 65+ (20,500)
- Attended (12,213) (63%, 70%)
- Currently Wave 3 postal questionnaire 2008 ~ 3300
- About 2900 answered the sex questions
- For this study randomly selected 164 subjects aged 82-87 years



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### SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Now we would like to ask you about sexual relationships you may have had. By 'sex' or 'sexual activity', we mean any mutually voluntary activity with another person that involves sexual contact, whether or not intercourse or orgasm occurs.

76. For some people sex is an important part of their lives and for others it is not very important at all. How important a part of your life would you say that sex is **now**?

Extremely  Very  Moderately  
 Somewhat  Not at all

77. How many people, including men and women, have you had sexual activity with in the **last five years**, even if only one time?

People

78. During the **last 12 months**, how often did you have sex?

Did not have sex (Go to question 80)  
 At least once a week  
 Two to three times a month  
 Once a month or less

79. During the **last 12 months**, would you say that you had sex:

More often than you would like?  
 About as often as you would like?  Go to question 81  
 Less often than you would like?

80. If you did not have sex in the **last 12 months**, why not? (Please answer **EACH** question)

a. <b>I</b> was not interested	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
b. <b>My partner</b> was not interested	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
c. Physical problems or limitations <b>I</b> had	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
d. Physical problems or limitations <b>my partner</b> had	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
e. My children or other family members would not approve	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
f. I was grieving	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
g. I did not have a partner	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
h. Other (Please specify below)	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No

### Perceptions and frequency of sex

		Men n = 164		Women n = 164	
		n	% (95% CI)	n	% (95% CI)
Sex - importance	Very	16	9.76 (5.68-15.4)	3	1.83 (0.38-5.25)
	Moderately	31	18.9 (13.2-25.7)	11	6.71 (3.40-11.7)
	Somewhat	20	12.2 (7.61-18.2)	5	3.05 (1.00-6.97)
	Not at all	97	59.1 (51.2-66.7)	145	88.4 (82.5-92.9)
Sex - in last 12mths	No sex	125	79.6 (72.5-85.6)	139	90.3 (84.4-94.4)
	<Monthly	15	9.55 (5.45-15.3)	9	5.84 (2.71-10.8)
	Monthly	14	8.92 (4.96-14.5)	4	2.60 (0.71-6.52)
	Weekly	3	1.91 (0.40-5.48)	2	1.30 (0.16-4.61)
Sex - more or less?	More/same	19	41.3 (27.0-56.8)	16	45.7 (28.8-63.4)
	Less often	27	58.7 (43.2-73.0)	19	54.3 (36.6-71.2)

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### Sexual activity, marital status and importance of sex

		Not sexually active		Sexually active		
		n	% (95% CI)	n	% (95% CI)	
Marital status	Men	Married/de facto	88	71.0 (62.1-78.8)	24	77.4 (58.9-90.4)
	Other	36	29.0 (21.2-37.9)	7	22.6 (9.59-41.1)	
Women	Married/de facto	44	30.3 (23.0-38.5)	7	46.7 (21.3-73.4)	
	Other	101	69.7 (61.5-77.0)	8	53.3 (26.6-78.7)	
Sex - importance	Men	Very	5	3.91 (1.28-8.88)	10	31.3 (16.1-50.0)
	Moderately	16	12.5 (7.32-19.5)	14	43.8 (26.4-62.3)	
	Somewhat	14	10.9 (6.11-17.7)	6	18.8 (7.21-36.4)	
	Not at all	93	72.7 (64.1-80.2)	2	6.25 (0.77-20.8)	
Women	Moderately	3	2.04 (0.42-5.85)	3	20.0 (4.33-48.1)	
	Somewhat	4	2.72 (0.75-6.82)	7	46.7 (21.3-73.4)	
	Not at all	140	95.2 (90.4-98.1)	1	6.67 (0.17-31.9)	

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## Conclusions

- Sexual activity occurs throughout life – does not stop at age 80 years
- Perceptions of importance of sex seem to be strongly influenced by sexual activity which in turn is influenced by an available partner which may be largely responsible for gender issues.

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Please visit our website for more details on our project



<http://www.menwomenandageing.org>