Intimacy and chronic illness

Iris Zink, NP
Objectives: The audience will be able to:

1. identify at least (2) of the 10 myths about sexual intimacy
2. identify at least (3) most common patient concerns related to intimacy and their health
3. identify at least (3) domains on the wheel of total health
4. identify (2) of the (3) factors which are imperative to maintenance of a healthy intimate relationship
5. identify the (2) largest sexual organs on the body
6. Identify relationship builders and busters
Why?

Mary
Holistic Self

American Pie

- Psychological Health
- Social Health
- Sexual Health
- Physical Health
- Spiritual Health
Whom?

- 2/3 of pts with hip and back OA experience sexual problems
- 62% of pts with RA reported difficulties with sexual performance
- 50% of AS pts report issues with ↓ in desire, satisfaction and frequency of sex
- 71% of pts said their FMS had put a strain on their relationship
- 50% of ♀ and 75% of ♂ report sexual dysfx during course of MS

See reference articles 1, 5, 9.
Disease states that affect sexual health

- Psoriasis/eczema/neurofibromatosis
- DM
- Sleep apnea
- MS
- Spinal cord injury
- Arthritis
- COPD/emphysema
- Asthma/pulm disease
- Cancer
- SLE/Sjogren
- Post surgery pts
  mastectomy, hysterectomy, prostatectomy
- CVD post MI or CVA
- Parkinson
- Deafness, blindness
- HTN
- Depression
- Crohns/UC
- FMS
Define sexuality

- “the ultimate union of body and mind”
  (Clayton and Ramamurthy)

- Adult time: the playground for adults.

- “If you believe you shouldn’t enjoy sex, then you won’t”
  (Locker, S. Complete Idiots Guide)
Acknowledge the importance of Touch

- Provides a connection
- Conveys affirmation
- Reassures the patient
- Decreases stress
- Improves self esteem

Davidhizar, and Newman Giger, 1996
Why do we need sex?

- Even among non-humans, sex appears to be regularly practiced for a whole range of non-reproductive benefits.
- Homosexual behavior occurs in > 450 species: kissing bonobos, nuzzling zebras and necking among giraffes.
- Sex is fun but so is gardening, traveling and playing cards, but when was the last time you woke up with your heart racing thinking about garden plants?
L.S.D.s.

Love yourself enough to take care of yourself
Orgasm and Laughter are a part of our basic physiology
Maintaining your support network: Ashley’s story
What really happens?

♥ ↑ heart rate
♥ ↑ muscle tension
♥ ↑ blood flow
♥ ↑ body warmth
♥ ↑ lubrication
✍ swelling of the clitoris
✍ swelling of vaginal lips
✍ penile erection
✍ nipple erections
✍ ↑ sensitivity to stimulation
✍ ↓ sensitivity to pain
Bonobos and humans utilize sexuality for social purposes: Tension reduction, bonding, conflict resolution, entertainment...
G-Spot

Gräfenberg spot, named for German gynecologist Ernst Gräfenberg
What is normal?

- Appearance
- Feelings
- Concerns
- Frequency
Self acceptance
"Come on, Wendell — surely we can settle this like mature adults."
“Sexual dysfunction is often the first manifestation of physical illness but is often not inquired about on routine review of systems.”

Stress as a factor

- Sex for men is a stress reliever
- Sex for women requires stress relief
Mating Call

"Stop it, George—you know I can't resist that mating call thing!"

© Original Artist
Timing is everything
Lindsey
Linda & Ann
The brain: what is going on up there?

THE MALE BRAIN

- Oxytocin
- DHEA
- Testosterone
- Progesterone
- Nitric oxide
- Dopamine
- Serotonin
- Norepinephrine

FOOTNOTE: the “Listening to children cry in the middle of the night” gland is not shown due to it’s small and underdeveloped nature. Best viewed under a microscope.
Fifty Shades of Grey
The 2 largest sexual organs?

1. Brain (90% OF SEX IS IN THE MIND)
2. Skin

stimulation and desire
Patient concerns

- Ability to satisfy partner
- Lack of sexual desire
- Change in role status
- Change in partner perception
- Pain during sex
- Death
- Privacy **

- Ejaculatory dysfunction
- Anorgasmia
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Communication barriers (sex, needs and anxiety)
- Urinary incontinence
- Spasticity
I can do six weeks standing on head. I'm a sexual camel.

~GEORGE
Top 10 myths of sex

1) sex = intercourse
2) Sex goal = orgasm
3) General health does not affect sexual health
4) Use of sexual aids is not sexy
5) Good sex just happens
6) Disabled people are not sexual
7) There comes a time when sex isn’t important
8) My health and physical changes no longer make me attractive
9) I am who I am sexually because of my parts
10) There is nothing more I could possibly learn about sex
You are never too old for sex......
Why is sex sooo great?

• Wales 1980 study: ♂ who had sex 2 * a week or more had ½ as many♥ attacks after 10 years than ♂ who had sex < once a month

• Whipple study: G spot pressure raised pain thresholds by 40% during orgasm to total 110%

• Levels of immunoglobulins were 30% ↑ in those who were sexually active

• ↑ longevity, ↓ breast cancer, ↓ prostate cancer

• ↑ endorphins = ↓ anxiety
According to German psychologist Dr. Arthur Sazbo, a study found that those who kiss their spouse each morning miss less work because of illness than those who do not. They also have fewer auto accidents on the way to work. They earn 20 to 30 percent more monthly and they live about five years more than those who don't even give each other a peck on the cheek.
10 Surprising Health Benefits of Sex
The perks of sex extend well beyond the bedroom.
By Kara Mayer Robinson
FROM THE WEBMD ARCHIVES

Sex not only feels good. It can also be good for you. Here’s what a healthy sex life can do for you.

1. Helps Keep Your Immune System Humming
“Sexually active people take fewer sick days,” says Yvonne K. Fulbright, PhD a sexual health expert.
People who have sex have higher levels of what defends your body against germs, viruses, and other intruders. Researchers at Wilkes University in Pennsylvania found that college students who had sex once or twice a week had higher levels of the a certain antibody compared to students who had sex less often.

2. Boosts Your Libido
“Having sex will make sex better and will improve your libido,” says Lauren Streicher, MD. She is an assistant clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago.
For women, having sex ups vaginal lubrication, blood flow, and elasticity, she says, all of which make sex feel better and help you crave more of it.

3. Improves Women’s Bladder Control
A strong pelvic floor is important for avoiding incontinence, something that will affect about 30% of women at some point in their lives.
Good sex is like a workout for your pelvic floor muscles. When you have an orgasm, it causes contractions in those muscles, which strengthens them.

4. Lowers Your Blood Pressure
Research suggests a link between sex and lower blood pressure, says Joseph J. Pinzone, MD. He is CEO and medical director of Amai Wellness.
“There have been many studies,” he says. “One landmark study found that sexual intercourse specifically (not masturbation) lowered systolic blood pressure.” That’s the first number on your blood pressure test.

5. Counts as Exercise
“Sex is a really great form of exercise,” Pinzone says. It won’t replace the treadmill, but it counts for something.
Sex uses about five calories per minute, four more calories than watching TV. It gives you a one-two punch: It bumps up your heart rate and uses various muscles.
So get busy! You may even want to clear your schedule to make time for it on a regular basis. “Like with exercise, consistency helps maximize the benefits,” Pinzone says.

6. Lowers Heart Attack Risk
A good sex life is good for your heart. Besides being a great way to raise your heart rate, sex helps keep your estrogen and testosterone levels in balance.
“When either one of those is low you begin to get lots of problems, like osteoporosis and even heart disease,” Pinzone says.
Hanging sex more often may help. During one study, men who had sex at least twice a week were half as likely to die of heart disease as men who had sex rarely.

7. Lessens Pain
Before you reach for an aspirin, try for an orgasm.
“Orgasm can block pain,” says Barry R. Komisaruk, PhD, a distinguished service professor at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. It releases a hormone that helps raise your pain threshold.
Stimulation without orgasm can also do the trick. “We’ve found that vaginal stimulation can block chronic back and leg pain, and many women have told us that genital self-stimulation can reduce menstrual cramps, arthritic pain, and in some cases even headache,” Komisaruk says.

8. May Make Prostate Cancer Less Likely
Going for the gusto may help ward off prostate cancer.
Men who ejaculated frequently (at least 21 times a month) were less likely to get prostate cancer during one study, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.
You don’t need a partner to reap this benefit: Sexual intercourse, nocturnal emission, and masturbation were all part of the equation.
It’s not clear that sex was the only reason that mattered in that study. Lots of factors affect cancer risk. But more sex won’t hurt.
WebMD Feature Reviewed by Michael W. Smith, MD on October 24, 2013

9. Improves Sleep
You may nod off more quickly after sex, and for good reason.
“After orgasm, the hormone prolactin is released, which is responsible for the feelings of relaxation and sleepiness” after sex, says Sheenie Ambardar, MD. She is a psychiatrist in West Hollywood, Calif.

10. Eases Stress
Being close to your partner can soothe stress and anxiety.
Ambardar says touching and hugging can release your body’s natural “feel-good hormone.” Sexual arousal releases a brain chemical that revs up your brain’s pleasure and reward system.
Sex and intimacy can boost your self-esteem and happiness, too, Ambardar says. It’s not only a prescription for a healthy life, but a happy one.
WebMD Feature Reviewed by Michael W. Smith, MD on October 24, 2013
Never underestimate the power of a squeeze.

- Dr Arnold Kegel 1952 study on pelvic floor hypotonus.
Neuropathy and Sjogren Syndrome

- 10-38% have peripheral neuropathy
- 35-40% have Raynauds
NO PORN OH!

EAT STRAWBERRIES
FROM MY NIPPLES

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

-Aristotle

Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage

Mark Gungor
Just do IT!!

"Some people want it to happen. Some wish it would happen. Others make it happen."
- Michael Jordan

Tracey Cox
Supersex for Life
the great sex guide for long-term lovers

Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage
Unlocking the Secrets to Life, Love, and Marriage
Do NOT emasculate your spouse

I'm searching for a perfect man like me.
Men have it, women need it!
Tools for the patients

♥ S  Self confidence & sense of self
♥ H  keep their sense of Humor
♥ E  Enthusiasm, drive and desire
♥ E  Education
♥ T  Tools and support system
♥ S  Spirit and keep some patience
Tools
Communication, Communication, Communication

All good things come to those who communicate
Communication tips: Let’s talk about sex baby.

- Start with the word “I”
- I have noticed….
- I like it when we…..
- I like it when you touch me…..
- I would really like to try ______
- I heard a study where people ______.
- Talk with your clothes on first.
Know your target
Lubes and Meds

- KY jelly or beads
- Vagifem tabs
- Estrogen cream or rings
- Replens
- Astroglide
- Baby oil aloe infused
- Vitamin E
- Coconut oil

- Viagra
- Levitra
- Cialis
- Caverject
- Vacuum pumps
- Addyi ???
1. Talk to one another
2. Spend 30 min touching each other without intercourse or orgasm
3. If you are interested in steamy sex talk, you have to practice.
4. Know your body and what makes you aroused.
5. Date!!! Make it a priority!
Summary

- Know how you feel about sex
- Try not to appear shocked
- Treat the patient holistically and bring it up
- Know your resources and do not be afraid to refer patients out
- Exercise makes everything better

 Cartoon: "Eat less and exercise more? That’s the most ridiculous fad diet I’ve heard of yet!"
Resources

- American Association of sex educators, counselors, and therapists. (www.aasect.org)
- The American board of Sexology. (www.sexologist.org)
- International Society of the study of Women’s Sexual Health. (http://www.isswsh.org)
- The Society of Sex therapy and research. (http://www.sstarnet.org)
- National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health (NPWH.org)
- Menopause.com
References
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