

Age, Generation and Attitudes to Sex: Findings from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing

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Age-related differences in sexual experiences might reflect differences in functioning and attitudes, and age-related differences in attitudes might reflect the effects of ageing and differences across generations. We explore the relationship between sexual attitudes and age and generation using data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, which collected relevant data from a nationally representative sample of just over 7000 adults. Questions covered topics such as sex outside marriage, sex in the media, importance of sex to relationships and gender difference in sex drives. Principle components analysis revealed four attitudinal factors reflecting 'judgements', 'benefits', 'pressures' and 'gender and age difference', which were associated with age and gender. We explore the associations between these age group differences and sexual histories and identities, and compare them with differences in other attitudes (such as to religion) to examine how far they might be driven by age cohort (generation) or ageing effects.

GERONTOLOGIST. OXFORD UNIV PRESS INC. 56: 132-132. 01 Nov 2016