

Psychosocial Moderators of the Association Between Sexuality and Health in Older Couples

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Little is known about how specific aspects of later-life sexuality (activities, function and difficulties) interrelate within a coupled relationship to produce positive or negative outcomes for the couple. We used data from the Sexual Relationships and Activities questionnaire (SRA-Q) included in wave 6 of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, where over 2000 married/cohabiting couples aged 50 and over completed the SRA-Q. In dyadic analyses, poorer general health in the male partner was associated with a reduced likelihood of sexual activity in both partners, while the female's general health was only associated with the frequency of her own sexual activity. However, the directionality of the association between health and sexuality, i.e., 'does positive sexuality promote good health in later-life or vice versa?', remains contentious. We extend these analyses using actor-partner interdependence models to examine how different patterns of psychosocial factors moderate the association between sexuality and health within a couple.

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