Project (NSHAP) at Wave 2. Analyses of variance were conducted to test the effects of gender, age group, and partner status. Multiple regression and mediation analyses were conducted to test the mediating role of the importance of sex. We found that 47% of men and 19% of women reported being distressed by their sexual problems. Females, older adults, and those without partners were found to be less sexually distressed, and the differences were explained by differences in their attitude towards the importance of sex. These results showed that attitude towards the importance of sex helped explain why sexual distress varied by gender, age group and partner status. These findings highlighted that viewing sex to be important can come at a cost, echoing recent concerns about society’s overly strong emphasis on sex in late-life. Results provided insight on ways to reduce sexual distress through adjusting attitude towards sex in late-life.

THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL FLUIDITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON EGO INTEGRITY IN OLDER ADULTS

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The population of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) Americans is growing as the number of older adults “come out.” While we know that “coming out” later in life impacts the experience of aging, little research has examined ways in which social support and sexual fluidity influence ego integrity in older adults. The present study investigated ego integration, changed sexual behavior, and perceived social support in adults 45 years of age and older who had been in a long-term relationship with the opposite sex prior to “coming out” as LGB. The average of participants was 61 years, sixty-eight percent (N = 43) were currently married or in a domestic partnership, and eighty-six percent (N = 54) identified as Caucasian. Individuals were recruited to participate in the survey utilizing online social media. Results (N = 63) suggested that those whose behavior was more sexually fluid were least ego integrated. Timing of “coming out” as gay, lesbian or bisexual (LGB), Early (44 and younger) versus Late (after the age of 45) impacted the degree of sexual fluidity and perceived social support. Results indicated those who “came out” Late were more sexually fluid and were less fearful of “coming out.” The most significant result revealed social support from significant others to be most impactful compared to friends and family. This research expands on the challenges of those who are aging in a non-normative environment. The implications suggest that individuals who “come out” later have a more difficult time with accepting their sexual fluidity.

USE IT OR LOSE IT: MORE RECENT SEX AND ITS IMPACT ON OLDER ADULT WELL-BEING

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Sexual activity as we age has been demonstrated to be an essential component of a fulfilling life. Despite the rapidly growing aging population, there remains a lack of research exploring the potentially negative impact of the absence of recent sexual activities on aspects of older adults’ subjective sense of well-being. Thus, the current study aims to explore the relationship between more recent sexual episodes in older adults and facets of subjective well-being such as physical and mental health, pain intensity, and ability to engage in activities. Researchers utilized 67,477 ageing and older adult participants from the de-identified WHO Study on Global AGEing and Adult Health (SAGE) database to explore the differences in sexual activity and several aspects of well-being through a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Results derived from a two-way MANOVA demonstrated a significant overall effect for the additive model at α=.05, Wilk’s λ=.987, F(76,106624.644)=4.804, p < .001. Significant differences were found in participants that last had sex 1–2 months ago and those that last had sex more than a year ago on subjective overall health, anxiety/worry, depression, cognition, and functional ability (vision, hearing, movement, exercise). Implications of the current findings include highlighting the importance of evaluation of the time frame of sexual activity in older adults. Future studies should explore the possible impact of implicit and explicit older adults’ sexual attitudes and the inclusion of assessing recent sexual activity in screening for older adult well-being.

SESSION 1220 (POSTER)

FAMILY CAREGIVING

ADOLESCENT DEMENTIA CAREGIVERS: PERCEPTIONS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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The National Alzheimer’s Association estimates that 250,000 youths under the age of 18 help support a family member with dementia, but few studies exist to shed light on the tasks performed, or whether caregiving influences psychological well-being. Adolescents age 12–17 participated in focus groups as part of an exploratory study to understand how they experience caregiving roles. Five males and six females living in northwest Ohio with an average age of 15 were recruited. Four participants were African-American, seven were White; one identified as Hispanic/Latino. All but one were attending school, and most reported their health as excellent or very good. Caregiving was provided for three grandmothers, five grandfathers, two great-grandfathers, a great-grandmother, and an uncle. A qualitative thematic analysis of the data revealed themes related to caregiving tasks performed, training and support needs, perceptions of family obligation, and psychological well-being. Caregiving duties ranged from companionship to medical care. Adolescents as young as 12 managed medications and a number of the youths performed tasks healthcare workers often assist with, such as bathing and toileting. When present, training and support was primarily informal and self-initiated. The participants expressed an appreciation for the importance of family support, did not think the caregiving tasks interfered with other social aspects of their lives, and most held positive views of their caregiving experiences. The findings of this study provide new insight into the experience of dementia caregiving that can be used to develop supportive and enriching programs aimed at increasing the wellbeing of caregiving youths.

ADULT GRANDCHILD SUPPORT PROVIDED TO GRANDPARENTS

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