
SEXUALITY AND EMOTIONAL LIFE IN PEOPLE WITH SEVERE LONG-TERM MENTAL DISORDERS

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Sexuality and emotional life are rarely focus on attention in people suffering from severe long-term mental diseases like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Methods: 53 patients and 47 matched controls were studied using a new questionnaire (SEXSAM Scale) measuring relevance of sexual and emotional relationships in patients' daily life. A specific Psychotropic-Related Sexual Dysfunction Questionnaire (PRSexDQ-SALSEX Montejo 2001-2008), Sexual Activity Assessment Scale modified from Kinsey (Montejo 2006) and the HONOS Scale measuring bio-psychosocial functioning were also applied.

Results: Sexuality (physic and emotional) was scored as high valuable and the main motivation for sexual activity was looking for love and fondness in both groups. No differences were found in the value of more affective behaviours such as kissing, caressing, hugging or massaging. Global satisfaction in sexual and emotional life was significantly superior in control group and linked to the higher frequency of sexual relations. Many patients suffered for sexual dysfunction related to the treatment use and many of them were dissatisfied with their sexual life. Just a few numbers of patients had regular sexual intercourses. Patients describe an improvement in the self-perception of mood, appetite, sleep, anxiety level, humour sense and self-esteem when they have sexual relations. Predominant sexual activity for patients was masturbation. Prostitution use was higher in patient group. All these findings are negatively influencing personal satisfaction and quality of life.

Conclusion: Relevance of sexual and emotional life in patients is as high as in normal population. These patients are more concerned about affection and companionship than about physical pleasure.