Intimacy and chronic illness

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Objectives:
The audience will be able to:

1. confirm desire to speak with health care provider about sexual concerns
2. identify at least (2) of the 10 myths about sexual intimacy
3. identify at least (3) most common patient concerns related to intimacy and their health
4. identify at least (3) domains on the wheel of total health
5. identify (2) of the (3) factors which are imperative to maintenance of a healthy intimate relationship
6. identify the (2) largest sexual organs on the body
Holistic Self

American Pie

- Psychological Health
- Social Health
- Sexual Health
- Physical Health
- Spiritual Health
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
What is normal?

- Appearance
- Feelings
- Concerns
- Frequency
“Sexual problems are frequent in many clinical conditions but are not yet a routine part of diagnostic workup or therapeutic planning”

(Bitzer, Planto, et al. Sexual counseling for women…article 7)
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!”
Timing is everything
"Come on, Wendell — surely we can settle this like mature adults."
Anatomy and physiology

- Sensory vagus nerve
- Midbrain reticular formation
- Basal ganglion
- Anterior insula cortex
- Amygdala
- Cerebellum
- Hypothalamus
Never underestimate the power of a squeeze.

- Dr Arnold Kegel 1952 study on pelvic floor hypotonus.
Tools
Communication, Communication Communication

All good things come to those who communicate
Know your target
Lubes and Meds

- KY jelly or beads
- Zestra (OTC)
- Vagifem tabs
- Estrogen cream or rings
- Replens
- Astroglide
- Baby oil aloe infused
- Vitamin E

- Viagra
- Levitra
- Cialis
- Caverject
- Vacuum pumps
Homework

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
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