

Abstract

Quality of sexual life in perimenopausal women

Introduction. Women today, who go through the perimenopausal period treat sex life as an important aspect of social functioning. Unfortunately, changes which women undergo in perimenopausal period may affect women's quality of life and self-esteem.

Aim of the thesis. Assessment of the quality of sexual life of women in perimenopausal period.

Material and methods. The study group consisted of 200 women aged 45 to 55, they were women working in the Gynecology and Obstetrics Clinic, patients of the General Surgery Clinic, Internal Medicine, Nephrology and Endocrinology Clinic with the Nuclear Medicine Laboratory at the St. Queen Jadwiga's Regional Clinical Hospital No. 2 in Rzeszow, students of the University of the Third Age in Rzeszów, women from the Postgraduate Education Center of Nurses and Midwives in Rzeszów. The control group consisted of 100 women aged 20 to 30, they were students of the University of Rzeszów in the field of Obstetrics. The study, conducted in 2016, was based on a diagnostic survey with the use of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the author's own survey questionnaire, Mell-Krat Scale for women, and the Female Sexual Functioning Index (FSFI).

Results. The biggest number of respondents obtained average results on the life satisfaction scale (47.0% in total). The most troublesome symptoms of menopause were: hot flashes 51.0%, fatigue 41.0%, weight gain 39.0%, drenching sweats at nighttime 35.5%, irritability 35.5%, palpitations 34.5%, decreased desire for sex 32.5% and vaginal dryness 31.5%. The influence of menopause symptoms on sex life was noticed by 43.0% of the study group. It was demonstrated that the more menopausal symptoms the women reported, the lower their satisfaction with life on the SWLS scale was ($p=0.007$). Women from the control group felt more sexually attractive ($p<0.001$). Sex life was more important for women in the control group ($p<0.001$). Women from the control group talked about their sexual expectations with their husband / partner more often ($p<0.001$). 25.0% of women from the study group and 38.0% of women from the control group talked with the gynecologist about their sex life, possible disorders or problems. Women from the control group more often used items that diversify sex life, i.e. lubricants, massage oils, condoms, erotic underwear and handcuffs, while women from the study group did not use the gadgets ($p<0.001$). Feeling of deterioration in the quality of sex

life during menopause compared to the previous period accompanied 52.0% of respondents. Greater satisfaction and better quality of sex life according to the Mell-Krat scale were reported for women from the control group in the following categories: libido ($p<0.001$), need for sexual contact ($p<0.001$) orgasm frequency ($p<0.001$), intercourse frequency, ($p<0.001$) orgasm frequency during intercourse ($p=0.003$), percentage of intercourse with orgasm ($p<0.001$), sexual arousal before intercourse ($p<0.001$), feelings during intercourse ($p<0.001$), speed of achieving orgasm ($p=0.041$), mood before intercourse ($p<0.001$), mood after intercourse ($p<0.001$), self-esteem ($p<0.001$), being active in intercourse ($p<0.001$), positions ($p<0.001$), behavior during orgasm ($p<0.001$), vaginal contractions in orgasm ($p<0.001$), frequency of vaginal reactions in orgasm ($p<0.001$). According to the interpretation of the Mell-Krat scale, 76.0% of women in the study group and 41.0% of the respondents in the control group received a suboptimal result. These results indicate the possibility of presence of dysfunctions in sexual reactions. All women in the study group and women in the control group obtained FSFI scores below standard. Test outcomes indicate that the women are at risk for sexual disorders. However, comparing the two groups women from the control group obtained higher scores on the entire scale ($p=0.003$).

Conclusions. Almost half of women in perimenopause, are averagely satisfied with their sex lives. The quality of sexual life at perimenopausal age is decreasing, but its significance does not change with age. Therefore, at perimenopausal age it is worth considering factors that improve the quality of sexual intercourse, such as: lubricants, massage oils, stimulating condoms, erotic lingerie, etc. Somatic symptoms of menopause are the factors that reduce satisfaction with sexual life in the perimenopausal period. This makes decreased satisfaction with sex life another important indication for the treatment of menopausal disorders. According to the Mell-Krat scale, as many as $\frac{3}{4}$ women at perimenopausal age demonstrate the possibility of presence of sexual dysfunctions, or are at risk for sexual disorders. Taking into consideration the importance of the quality of sexual life for human health, an effort should be made to provide perimenopausal women with professional medical and psychological care to improve the intimate sphere of their lives.

Key words: life satisfaction, sexual activity, perimenopausal period, quality of sexual life.