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Exploring Sexual Well-being in Infertile Couples: A Gender Perspective

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Introduction: Infertility can have a profound impact on couples, causing emotional distress and negatively affecting sexual well-being. In Tunisia, it contributes to over 20% of divorce cases due to relationship strain. Despite its significance, research on the influence of infertility on sexual experiences, particularly gender differences, remains limited.

Objectives: This study aims to evaluate the effects of infertility on sexual health of Tunisian infertile couples and to compare these effects between men and women.

Methods: We conducted a cross-sectional study involving sexually active infertile couples who had been under follow-up for at least one year at a specialized Assisted Reproductive Technology center in Tunis. Each participant completed closed-ended questions regarding their sexual experiences following the infertility diagnosis, including the frequency of sexual intercourse, preferred types of sexual activities, sexual positions believed to enhance conception, and overall sexual rhythm. The Arizona Sexual Experiences Scale (ASEX) was used in Arabic to assess sexual function.

Results: A total of 60 infertile couples participated in the study. The average age of women was 35.07 ± 4 years while the average age of men 41.1 ± 6 years. Regarding sexual intercourse frequency, 35% of women (n=21) and 27% of men (n=16) reported a decrease, with no significant gender difference ($p=0.426$).

Infertility did not significantly alter preferences for sexual practices, as 78% of women (n=47) and 85% of men (n=51) reported no changes. Vaginal penetration was the predominant activity for both sexes (100%), while mutual masturbation was engaged in by 68% of women and 72% of men. Oral sex was reported by 57% of women and 53% of men, with no significant gender differences ($p>0.05$). In terms of sexual positions, 48% of women and 50% of men favored specific positions to enhance conception, with no significant differences ($p=0.995$). However, 48% of women and 64% of men adhered to a calendar-based rhythm, with women perceiving this regimen as more detrimental to spontaneity ($p=0.038$ and $p=0.041$).

Sexual dysfunctions were significantly more common in women, with a prevalence of 28% compared to only 5% in men. Desire disorders were the most commonly reported sexual dysfunction for both genders. Women exhibited significantly higher rates of physical and psychological arousal problems, as well as orgasmic disorders ($p<0.05$).

Conclusions: Screening for sexual dysfunction in infertile couples is essential not only for improving sexual health but also for providing tailored psychological support that considers gender differences. By identifying and addressing these issues, healthcare providers can enhance the overall well-being of couples dealing with infertility challenges.

Disclosure of Interest: None Declared

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Sexual and reproductive dysfunctions induced by chronic manganese exposure: Roles of neuroaffective and olfactory impairments

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Introduction: Reproduction in mammals relies on complex interactions involving the genital and olfactory systems, which can be influenced by environmental factors, such as manganese (Mn). Although essential for survival, Mn is potentially toxic over long periods, potentially affecting sexual and reproductive behaviors.

Objectives: This study aims to assess the long-term effects of Mn exposure on sexual and reproductive functions in male Wistar rats, focusing on Mn-induced neuroaffective and olfactory dysfunctions.

Methods: Male Wistar rats received intraperitoneal injections of Mn at doses of 6 mg/kg, 25 mg/kg, and 30 mg/kg for 12 weeks. Each experimental group consisted of one Mn-intoxicated male and four non-intoxicated females. After six days of cohabitation, the females were isolated to evaluate fertility outcomes. The study also monitored weight changes and conducted behavioral assessments for anxiety, depression, and olfactory functions in males.

Results: Higher Mn doses (25 mg/kg and 30 mg/kg) resulted in significant behavioral changes in males, including anxiety, depression, and olfactory dysfunctions, which were associated with decreased reproductive success. Specifically, pregnancy rates were 33% (4 out of 12) at 25 mg/kg and zero at 30 mg/kg. In contrast, males treated with 6 mg/kg Mn exhibited no significant neuroaffective or olfactory impairments, maintaining fertility rates comparable to those of the control groups.

Conclusions: Chronic Mn exposure adversely affects sexual behavior and reproductive success in male Wistar rats, probably due to olfactory and neuroaffective disruptions. Further research is recommended to elucidate the mechanisms underlying these effects.

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Psychosocial and relational resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evaluating sexual health and coping strategies in intimate relationships

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Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered daily life and affected the sexual dynamics of couples across various contexts. Enforced lockdowns and pervasive social isolation, coupled with heightened anxiety associated with the pandemic, have profoundly affected mental health and intimate relationships, affecting sexual satisfaction among couples. This narrative review examines the psychosocial effects of these changes on couples' sexuality, focusing on the challenges and coping strategies adopted by couples to mitigate the adverse effects and enhance intimate relationship quality.

Objectives: This review systematically analyzes the psychosocial impacts of the pandemic on couples' sexuality, using post-2020 literature to better understand these dynamics and enhance psychosexual support.

Methods: An extensive literature review was conducted across PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, focusing on keywords such as "COVID-19," "sexual health," "intimacy," "divorce," and "coping strategies." Ten high-quality studies published after 2020 were selected based on their methodological rigor and relevance to couples' dynamics. These studies include a mix of quantitative and qualitative research and systematic reviews, providing a broad yet detailed perspective on the topic.

Results: The findings reveal that the pandemic has significantly diminished couples' sexual desire and relationship satisfaction. Notable psychosocial effects include increased anxiety, stress, depression, and relational conflicts. Modifications in sexual frequency and quality were noted, yet many couples have adopted effective coping strategies such as enhanced communication, couples therapy, shared stress management activities, and the utilization of online psychological support resources, which have helped strengthen relationships during the pandemic.

Conclusions: The pandemic has profoundly influenced couples' sexual and relational health, introducing psychosocial stressors. Despite these challenges, the resilience displayed by couples through diverse coping strategies highlights their adaptive capacity. This review emphasizes the need for mental health professionals to integrate targeted interventions to support couples' well-being and prepare them for potential future crises.

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EPV1889

Sexual habits and chemsex use in a monographic consultation for sexually transmitted infections (STI)

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Introduction: The use of recreational drugs for sexual intercourse (*chemsex*) is a widespread practice in certain subgroups of the population in recent years. There is documentation of chemsex in men who have sex with men (MSM) but less data on its use in other populations (men who have sex with women, women, transgender women, transgender men) and its effects on mental health.

Objectives: Evaluate the use of chemsex in the population attended in a sexually transmitted infection (STI) consultation.

Methods: To evaluate the use of chemsex in the population attended in a sexually transmitted infection (STI) consultation, a survey was carried out on all patients who attended the STI consultation of the U. Ramón y Cajal Hospital between January and April 2022. The degree of anxiety and depression was assessed using the HADS scale.

Results: A total of 148 surveys were distributed, with 82 being completed. Among those surveyed, 56% had used drugs at some time in their lives, the vast majority of times associated with sexual relations. The most consumed drugs were alcohol, cannabis and poppers. There were no differences between MSM and non-MSM in this consumption ($p = 0.073$), but there were in the substances consumed: MSM consumed more gamma hydroxy-butyrate acid (GHB/GBL) ($p = 0.031$), mephedrone ($p = 0.031$) and poppers ($p = 0.019$). Using the HADS Scale, 34 patients suffered from anxious (41%) and 11 depressive symptoms (13%), with no significant differences between MSM and non-MSM.

Conclusions: *Chemsex* is a frequent phenomenon among patients attending in an STI consultation, both in the MSM and non-MSM population. It negatively impacts mental health, being associated with anxiety and depression. It is necessary to improve information to reduce drug use in this context.

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EPV1891

Navigating sexual health concerns in the medical profession: A Tunisian perspective

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Introduction: Sexual functioning is an essential aspect of human existence. Sexual dysfunctions are prevalent and negatively affect the quality of life in the general population. Little attention has been paid to the sexual function of health workers.

Objectives: The aim of our work was to evaluate sexual dysfunction among Tunisian doctors and to determine associated underlying factors.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted online, from January to March 2024, via a pre-established questionnaire. Tunisian doctors, who had finished their medical studies, working in the public or private sector and who agreed to anonymously respond to the questionnaire were included. Sociodemographic, economic, clinical data and those related to the medical profession were collected. Sexual function was evaluated with the Arizona Sexual Experience Scale (ASEX).

Results: A total of 80 individuals had fully responded to the questionnaire. The mean age of participants was 36.81 ± 7.49 years and 68,7 % (n=55) of them were male. Ninety five percent (n=76) were married and 77.5 % (n=62) had children. The mean working hours per week was 34.32 ± 5.32 . A regular physical activity was practiced by 35 % (n=28) of individuals. The mean monthly income