

Sexual dissatisfaction in postmenopausal women not linked to cardiovascular disease

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Although sexual dysfunction in some men is predictive of cardiovascular disease, this association has never been examined in women. In an article published in the April 2008 issue of *The American Journal of Medicine*, researchers found no increased prevalence or incidence of cardiovascular disease among postmenopausal sexually active female subjects who were dissatisfied with their sexual activity.

Researchers from Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) and Boston Medical Center (BMC) and collaborators nationwide examined data from over 93,000 women in the Women's Health Initiative Observational Study. Participants were sexually active postmenopausal women aged 50 to 79 years, recruited at 40 clinical centers throughout the United States and followed for 8-12 years. Based on responses to a baseline survey, subjects were classified as sexually satisfied or dissatisfied.

Researchers identified cardiovascular disease as a self-reported history of acute myocardial infarction, stroke, or coronary revascularization procedure. Related cardiovascular problems, including congestive heart failure, peripheral arterial disease and angina were also examined.

According to researchers, there was a modest association between being dissatisfied with sexual activity and having peripheral arterial disease, and angina was decreased among those dissatisfied with sexual activity. However, there was no association between sexual dissatisfaction and the presence of any other form of cardiovascular disease including heart

attack or stroke.

Writing in the article, Jennifer McCall-Hosenfeld, MD, MSc, a fellow in the Department of General Internal Medicine at BMC and Women's Health at BUSM, states, "In men, erectile dysfunction is a manifestation of cardiovascular disease, and can predict the development of adverse cardiovascular outcomes such as heart attack. In our study, we used decreased sexual satisfaction as a rough proxy measure for sexual dysfunction, and controlled for lifestyle issues and other factors that might impact sexual satisfaction. We did not find that sexual satisfaction predicted cardiovascular disease in the future."

Source: Elsevier

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