

# Sexually satisfied women have better general well-being and more vitality

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Pre- and post-menopausal women who self-rated themselves as being sexually satisfied had a higher overall psychological well-being score and scores for "positive well-being" and "vitality," compared with sexually dissatisfied women in a study of 295 women sexually active more than twice a month. The study, published today in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, also uncovered a positive association between age and well-being, but a negative association for general health.

The most commonly reported [sexual problems](#) in the area of consensual sexuality in [women](#) relate to sexual desire and interest, pleasure and satisfaction, and for most women these are part of the overall sexual experience, and are inextricably related. In contrast to studies of interventions for male erectile dysfunction, benefit of treatment in women with sexual dysfunction cannot be measured simply by the frequency of sexual events, as women frequently continue to be sexually active despite a high level of sexual [dissatisfaction](#). Thus the frequency of self-reported satisfactory sexual events has been used as the primary outcome in recent studies.

To assess whether there was a correlation between sexual satisfaction and well-being, the team of Australian researchers recruited women from the community aged 20-65 who self-identified as being satisfied or dissatisfied with their sexual function. Participants were also asked questions which identified whether they were pre- or post menopausal, with recruitment closed when there was an equal number of women in each of the four subgroups.

"We wanted to explore the links between sexual satisfaction and wellbeing in women from the community, and to see if there was any difference between pre- and [postmenopausal women](#)," said lead author Dr Sonia Davison, of the Women's Health Program at Monash University, Australia. "We found that women who were sexually dissatisfied had lower well-being and lower vitality. This finding highlights the importance of addressing these areas as an essential part of women's healthcare, because women may be uncomfortable discussing these issues with their doctor."

"The problem with interpreting this finding is that it is impossible to determine if dissatisfied women had lower well-being because they were sexually dissatisfied, or if the reverse is true, such that women who started with lower well-being tended to secondarily have sexual dissatisfaction," added Davison. "As such, pharmacotherapies aimed to treat sexual dysfunction may have secondary effects on well-being, and the reverse may be true."

As over 90% of women in this study reported their sexual activity involved a partner, and was initiated by the partner at least 50% of the time, the sexual activity of the women may have been affected by partner presence (or absence), partner health, and [sexual function](#), which were not addressed in this study. "The fact that women who self-identified as being dissatisfied maintained the level of sexual activity reported most likely represents established behaviour and partner expectation," said Professor Susan Davis, senior author of this study, also based at the Women's Health Program at Monash University, Australia. "It also reinforces the fact that frequency of [sexual activity](#) in women cannot be employed as a reliable indicator of sexual well-being."

"We are proud to publish this extremely important study in women's sexual health" said Dr. Irwin Goldstein, Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*. "This large study performed in the community

emphasizes the role and importance of women's sexual health in women's overall health and well-being. Previous criticism equated physicians' efforts to improve a woman's satisfaction with her sexual life as medicalization. Dr. Davison's and co-workers' research will help health care professionals appreciate the need for overall women's healthcare to include women's [sexual health](#) care."

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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