

New study contradicts negative perceptions of menopause

July 6 2010

New research from the University of Sheffield has found that social and psychological factors have the biggest influence upon women's sexual behaviour during the menopause, rather than biological changes such as declining hormone levels.

The study, which will be published in the *Journal of Health Psychology*, found that contrary to previous evidence, women's experience of sexual activity during the menopause differs greatly between individuals, and is not always directly linked to biological factors.

The research team interviewed a group of British women to capture their perspectives on the menopause and assessed whether they had experienced change in sexual activity and satisfaction during their menopause.

Almost all had experienced some form of change but the findings indicated that these were down to a number of external factors such as providing care for a relative, partner's low sexual desire and the quality of the relationship, alongside biological factors such as perceived changes in levels of hormones. The findings therefore concluded that women go through many lifestyle changes during mid-life which are also contributing factors.

Dr Sharron Hinchcliff, from the University's School of Nursing and Midwifery, said: "Our study has examined the influence of psycho-social factors on sexual activity during the menopause to provide a new

perspective on the increasingly medicalised view of this time of life.

"Biological research tends to report the negative impact of declining [hormone levels](#) on women's ability to engage in and enjoy [sexual activities](#), whereas our study found that some women actually saw an increase in sexual desire during this time. By highlighting this variability, we hope to challenge the perspectives that treat women as a homogeneous group or which regard the [menopause](#) as an event that will affect all women's sexuality in the same way."

Provided by University of Sheffield

Citation: New study contradicts negative perceptions of menopause (2010, July 6) retrieved 20 March 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-07-contradicts-negative-perceptions-menopause.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--