

Women with RA report lower sexual function

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Rheumatoid arthritis has negative effects on sexual function in women, with depressive symptoms and disease severity linked to the degree of sexual dysfunction, according to a study published in the October issue of *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*.

(HealthDay)—Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) has negative effects on sexual function in women, with depressive symptoms and disease severity linked to the degree of sexual dysfunction, according to a study published in the October issue of *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*.

Halim Yilmaz, M.D., from the Konya Education and Research Hospital in Turkey, and colleagues compared sexual function in 95 women with RA and 108 healthy controls. Depression levels were assessed by the [Beck Depression Inventory](#) (BDI), and the Index of Female Sexual Function (IFSF) was used to assess sexual function of all participants.

The researchers found that patients with RA had lower total IFSF scores,

mean IFSF subgroup scores, and significance of sexual life scores compared with controls, and higher mean BDI scores. Patients with RA with BDI score ≥ 17 had a significantly lower mean of the total IFSF scores compared to those with BDI score lower than 17. As [disease severity](#) increased, the mean of the total IFSF score decreased. Total IFSF score correlated negatively with age and with disease characteristics, including measures of disease activity, pain, disability rate, and morning stiffness.

"Sexual dysfunction is among the frequently encountered problems in women with RA and closely related to depression, RA severity, pain, and disability accompanying RA," the authors write. "Therefore, patients should be investigated by being aware of the link between RA and sexual dysfunction by [health care professionals](#)."

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