

Sexual function, mental health linked in rheumatic disease

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(HealthDay)—The presence of anxiety and depression in people with rheumatic diseases may be an independent predictor of sexual dysfunction, according to a study published in the November issue of the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*.

Panagiota Anyfanti, M.D., from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece, and colleagues surveyed 509 consecutive rheumatologic patients (mean age, 54.7 years; 423 females) regarding sexual function. The authors used the Female Sexual Dysfunction Index (FSFI) and the International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF) questionnaire. Anxiety and depression were assessed using the Hamilton Anxiety Scale and the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale.

The researchers found that [sexual dysfunction](#) affected 69.9 percent of participants, anxiety 37.5 percent, and depression 22 percent. There was

a strong negative correlation between anxiety and both FSFI and IIEF score. Similar results were seen with depressive symptoms and both FSFI and IIEF scores. After adjusting for a variety of physical factors, aside from increasing age and female sex, depression ($P = 0.027$) and anxiety ($P = 0.049$) were the only predictors of sexual dysfunction.

"Physicians dealing with rheumatologic patients should be aware of these results and incorporate screening and treatment of the above comorbidities in the global assessment of their patients," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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