

Removing the stigma surrounding the sex lives of the over 60s will help improve sexual health

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The stigma surrounding the sex lives of older adults is being tackled with a pioneering website which aims to improve sexual health in the over 60s.

Age, Sex and You is the first website in the UK dedicated solely to providing advice about sex and intimate relationships for [older people](#) who feel reluctant to talk to their doctor or get advice from family and friends.

The website has been launched by researchers from the University of Sheffield who, in a recent study, found the prejudice and discrimination that older people face when seeking support for their sexual needs significantly affects their health and wellbeing.

Sexually transmitted infection (STI) diagnosis in people aged between 50 and 70 has risen by a third in recent years. However, the Sheffield study found that age-related stereotypes and embarrassment can prevent [older adults](#) from getting appropriate care for a sexual concern or advice about practising safe sex.

Dr. Sharron Hinchliff from the University of Sheffield's School of Nursing and Midwifery led the study and the creation of the pioneering website.

"A third of over-70s have sex at least twice a month but they face huge barriers particularly when it comes to seeking advice about sexual health," said Dr. Hinchliff.

"We know that many older adults enjoy sex and intimacy, and both are important factors in their quality of life," said Dr. Hinchliff.

"Our bodies change as we get older, which can lead to sexual changes, and it is really important to understand what changes are common with

age, but importantly when to seek professional help.

"Erectile dysfunction affects around 30 per cent of men aged 65-74 and uncomfortable vaginal dryness affects 20 per cent of women in the same age group, however many are too embarrassed to go to the doctor. This can impact on your psychological wellbeing and cause stress, anxiety or relationship difficulties.

"We are now living well, for longer, so it is increasingly important that we tackle the stigma surrounding the sex lives of older people. We hope the website will become a vital resource for people looking for evidence—based advice they can trust."

Dr. Hinchliff is a Reader in Psychology and Health and the founder of #SexRightsAge, a national campaign to recognise the sexual rights of older adults. She leads a programme of research which explores ageing, [sexual health](#), [intimate relationships](#) and psychological factors of [health](#), in order to improve patient quality of life and inform healthcare practice.

For more information about Age, Sex and You please visit:
www.agesexandyou.com

Provided by University of Sheffield

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