

Individual and relational correlates of sexual satisfaction in a clinical sample with sexual complaints: a cross-sectional study with cisgendered heterosexual adults in a monogamous relationship

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Rationale: Research with clinical samples with a diagnosis of Sexual Dysfunction has focused mainly on individual variables. Recently different theoretical approaches have emphasized the need to consider the role of relationship variables in research designs.

Research question: Are the associations between individual (personality, psychopathology, body image, cognitive distraction and sexual functioning) and relational (sexual self - disclosure and relational satisfaction) variables with sexual satisfaction in a clinical sample of cisgendered people who have sexual complaints and are involved in a heterosexual, dyadic, exclusive and committed relationship different in magnitude?.

Method(s): Participants were 22 Portuguese men and 28 women (n = 50) from the Sexology Clinic of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Lisbon, aged between 22 and 80 years (M = 34.92, SD = 12.115). The measures used were NEO-FFI (personality), BSI (psychopathology), GBD (body dissatisfaction), CDS (cognitive distraction), FSFI (female sexual functioning), IIEF (male sexual functioning), GMREL (relational satisfaction) and GMSEX (sexual satisfaction). In order to compare results by gender and explore the associations among the dimensions under study, the Student's t-test and Pearson's correlation index, (as well as their non-parametric alternatives whenever appropriate), the Kruskal-Wallis test and the Spearman test, were used.

Result(s): Except for neuroticism, that was significantly higher in women, no differences were found between men and women in the total scores of the measures used. Considering the associations in each group, in women, significant relationships were established between sexual satisfaction and psychopathology (depression), sexual functioning (FSFI total, desire / sexual interest, lubrication and sexual arousal) and relational satisfaction, and in men among sexual satisfaction and personality (extroversion), psychopathology (general index of symptoms, anxiety, depression, obsessions compulsions, hostility and psychoticism), sexual functioning (total IIEF, erectile function, sexual satisfaction and overall satisfaction) and relational satisfaction.

Conclusion(s): Despite the inherent limitations, the data partially supports the gender similarity hypothesis and highlights the role of both individual and relational variables in sexual satisfaction in this clinical sample. We will present suggestions for future statistically more powerful studies and will discuss possible implications for clinical practice.

Key Words: Sexual dysfunction; Clinical sample; Individual variables, Relationship variables

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