



Correlates between Healthy Aging and Sexual Function in Older Women in an Iranian Setting

Afrouz Mardi¹, Zahra Behboodi Moghadam², Parvaneh Naftchi³, Robab Hoseinpour⁴, Monir Mohammad Alipour⁵

¹Reproductive Health, Health Faculty, Ardabil University of Medical Sciences, Ardabil, Iran.

²Reproductive Health, Nursing and Midwifery Faculty, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

³Education Management, Medical Faculty, Ardabil University of Medical Sciences, Ardabil, Iran.

⁴Health Services Management, Health Faculty, Ardabil University of Medical Sciences, Ardabil, Iran.

⁵Department of Midwifery, Islamic Azad University, Khalkhal Branch, Ardabil, Iran

Abstract

Background: The world's population is aging and this trend continues. Older adults are living healthier and longer than in the last decades and their sexual health should also be considered along with their physical and mental health to promote healthy aging. This study aimed to examine the correlation between healthy aging and sexual function in elderly women.

Methods: In this Cross-sectional correlation study a total of 1245 women over 60 years old were selected by convenient sampling method. Demographic data of all participants were noted and health status and sexual function were evaluated by Goldberg General Health and Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) questionnaires, through face-to-face interviews.

Results: The participants' means age was 75.1±7.2 years, most of the women (40.08%) were

illiterate, and the majority of them were living with their married (44.81%) or single children (27.14%). 380 older women (30.52%) was healthy (the general health score was under 22). About 60% of women had engaged in sexual activity during the last 4 weeks and the total mean score of FSFI was 17.36±1.44. In addition, 84.33% of the women had sexual dysfunction (FSFI< 26.55). The age ($p<0.05$), educational level ($p<0.001$), living with children ($p<0.01$) and healthy aging ($p<0.01$) were found to be significantly related to sexual function.

Conclusion: Sexual function in elderly women is affected by several factors, such as healthy aging. Therefore, to promote successful aging in women, sexual function and healthy aging requires more attention when implementing women's health initiatives.

Key words: Healthy aging, Sexual function, Older women, Ardabil, Iran