

Prevalence of Sexual Activity Among Men Older Than 75

Nearly half of men in this study said sex was at least somewhat important to them.

Old age commonly is thought to dull interest in sexual activity, and knowledge about sexual activity patterns of older adults is limited. Researchers used data from a longitudinal study — originally conducted to study abdominal aorta screening — to assess sexual activity among nearly 2800 community-dwelling Australian men (age range, 75–95) who responded to questionnaires about sexual activity from 2008 to 2009. Additional questionnaires assessed social and medical factors, and sex hormone levels were obtained earlier, in 2001 to 2004.

Three quarters of participants were married or in a marriage-like relationship. Sex was considered at least somewhat important by 49%, and 31% had had sex at least once in the prior 12 months. Among men who reported being sexually active, 43% had sex less often than desired. Sexual activity decreased with advancing age — 40% of younger men (age range, 75–79) were sexually active, a percentage that dropped to 11% for the oldest men (age range, 90–95). Reasons for not engaging in sexual activity included lack of interest (41%), physical limitations (48%), and lack of a partner (21%). Higher free testosterone levels were associated with higher odds of being sexually active. The authors provide no data on the cognitive status of participants.

Comment: A sizeable proportion of these older men considered sex to be important, and many remained sexually active. The study refutes the notion that sexual activity is not of interest to older men. Notably, the study did not include older women.

— [Jamaluddin Moloo, MD, MPH](#)

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