

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

### Lori A. Futterman RN, Ph.D.



### Strides in Sexuality in Western Culture

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If we look historically at the science and treatment of sexual dysfunction we see that it has been influenced by a heteronormative aging population, and can be termed “The Graying of America” which is a contemporary term used to describe the baby boomer generation. The baby boomers generation added to the sexual revolution and witnessed the rise of oral contraceptives, the cultural shift in sex from procreation to a form of recreation and the trend for more permissive sexual attitudes and behaviors (Twenge, Sherman, & Wells, 2015). Today the focus with regard to sexual functioning is on quality of life, moving away from life expectancy to health expectancy, living life longer with the least amount of health issues and enjoying sex throughout their lives (Elders, 2010; Herbenick et al., 2010).

Male sexual dysfunctions began earning prominent media focus in the late '80s with the introduction of Viagra-like agents. This began the era of sexual pharmacology. A number of "Viagra failures" made it clear that a pill alone does not create an adequate sexual relationship. The complexity of sexual functioning was recognized and gave birth to the field of sexual medicine. Over the last several years there has been a growing collection of clinical research and treatment focusing on sexual functioning and dysfunction from a biopsychosocial perspective. This model can be applied to any sexual orientation and across gender. Since the millennium, science and treatment have advanced and is best viewed through the lens of the biopsychosocial model. This model assists us in with classification strategies of disorders. It is based on advances in research in brain neuroscience, and neurotransmitter balance, reproductive endocrinology, and ovarian hormones, psychological impact of traumatic events, mood and cognition body image, performance anxiety, stressors, the interpersonal domain related to relationship duration and satisfaction and sociocultural and religious factors (Kingsberg & Janata, 2007).

Sex is openly discussed by many and is generally seen in a positive light unless one is suffering from a sexual dysfunction or a disruption in sexual identity and gender identity. Disruptions impede one's development of sexual interaction and sexual practices and may be experienced by an awakening of gender identification. Integrating one's gender and sense of self occurs throughout development and will influence sexuality and its development (Nikkelen & Kreukels, 2018). People tend to suffer silently with sexual dysfunctions.

*Dr. Lori Futterman, Psy8636, is a clinical psychologist in private practice who specializes in sexual medicine and women's health. She is dedicated to helping both men and women achieve their highest potential and overcome difficulties with sex and intimacy and achieve inner balance and overall well-being.*

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