

Quality of life and sexual attraction in physically active and inactive older people

BACKGROUND

Human life expectancy should rise with a focus on enhancing quality of life, encompassing aspects such as physical activity, sexuality, and self-acceptance, which significantly affect satisfaction and relationships. This study examined how life satisfaction, physical activity, and self-esteem related to sexual attractiveness in seniors contribute to their overall quality of life, especially concerning self-worth and relationships.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

A total of 99 individuals, composed of 75 women and 24 men aged between 60 and 81, participated in the additional offer from the University of the Third Age. These respondents were all part of the study. The Satisfaction with Life Scale, self-assessment in terms of sexual attractiveness and a scale of physical activity level created for the study were used. The participants completed the questionnaires before the classes from the expanded offer of the Gdansk University of the Third Age.

RESULTS

The highest correlation was observed between the level of physical activity and satisfaction with life. The study also

showed a significant correlation between the self-assessment of sexual attractiveness and life satisfaction, and between the level of physical activity and the self-assessment of sexual attractiveness. Additionally, the results indicate a significantly higher level of self-esteem in terms of sexual attractiveness in men compared to women.

CONCLUSIONS

The study emphasizes the role of positive self-perception, notably in sexual attractiveness, and higher physical activity levels in predicting life satisfaction, while differences in self-esteem between genders suggest a need for more exploration and societal education, particularly among older generations.

KEY WORDS

elderly people; satisfaction with life; self-esteem in terms of sexual attractiveness; physical activity

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BACKGROUND

LIFE SATISFACTION IN OLDER ADULTS

The concept of positive aging is based on cultivating life satisfaction and psychological well-being; both of these factors can serve as determinants of mental health, resourcefulness, and a longer life for older people. Although the general opinion still sees old age as a period of sadness, suffering, and inactivity, theories which challenge this pessimistic and deterministic image are becoming increasingly popular (Bar-Tur, 2021). As it turns out, life satisfaction – in old age and other life stages alike – largely depends on the attitudes adopted (Taherkhani et al., 2023). There are many factors which can affect satisfaction, and various theories emphasize many different issues. Nonetheless, to a large degree these theories attribute quality of life to subjective opinions about it. This means that no one is condemned to unhappiness, or conditioned to feel a non-ceasing sense of satisfaction – individuals actively contribute to the quality of their lives themselves (Dhanabhakym & Sarath, 2023; Joseph, 2022).

Central to this notion is the widely accepted concept of activity, as highlighted by Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003), who investigated happiness and well-being, affirming that engagement and aspiration are essential for attaining life satisfaction. What is important, the activity pursued must be an attractive part of one's life rather than a chore whose only purpose is to protect an individual from the negative effects of aging. Therefore, these activities should match one's preferences, fitness, and skill. There is also Martin Seligman's (2011) PERMA model, which outlines five elements essential to well-being: positive emotions (experiencing joy, gratitude), engagement (deep involvement in activities), relationships (positive social connections), meaning (having purpose), and accomplishments (achieving goals). Physical activity has a strong connection to various aspects of well-being as described in Seligman's PERMA model. It is associated with enhanced positive emotions due to the release of endorphins, improved mood, and stress reduction. This, in turn, fosters life satisfaction. Additionally, the sense of "flow" or deep engagement during physical activities contributes to feelings of competence and meaningful involvement, further boosting well-being. Physical activity also plays a role in improving self-perception, such as feeling attractive, which enhances confidence in relationships and social interactions. Furthermore, achieving fitness goals or improved health provides a sense of accomplishment, especially for older adults, thereby reinforcing self-esteem and life satisfaction. Collectively, these effects of physical activity align with the key components of the PERMA

model, promoting overall life satisfaction and well-being (Bae et al., 2017; Lera-López et al., 2017; Rennekamp et al., 2009).

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN OLDER AGE

While a lack of agility and autonomy is not an inherent part of old age, these processes undoubtedly occur, especially later in life. The Central Statistical Office (2018) presents some disturbing data which claim that 54% of people with disabilities are seniors. The majority (66%) of them are people living in cities. Among people with disabilities, women made up more than half (60%), but this may be because women outnumber men in the entire population of people over 60 years of age. These results are hardly surprising when one takes into account other data presented by the Central Statistical Office – those on sporting activities undertaken by older people. The data indicate that only a quarter of the population engages in physical activity, with men demonstrating a slightly higher propensity for activity than women. Keeping fit is closely connected with living an active and healthy life. Exercise and activity are essential factors affecting human health and fitness, and this impact is even more clearly marked in older age (Sun et al., 2013). Regularly undertaken activity, appropriate to one's age and capabilities, is a way of preserving autonomy and self-dependence in everyday activities, thus allowing positive aging (Bień, 2006; Rodziewicz et al., 2019; Wizner, 2006). What is more, physical activity has been proved to positively affect well-being and the quality of life assessment. Skotnicka and Pieszko (2014) studied a group of individuals over 80 years of age and demonstrated that the highest scores in life quality belonged to those with the highest weekly energy expenditure.

For older people, the aim of physical activity is to inhibit involuntal changes, maintain independence in daily functioning, improve well-being, keep the right posture, and develop balance (Langhammer et al., 2018). Adequate motor activity can significantly affect self-esteem, attitudes towards the environment and other people, and thus improve one's quality of life and increase satisfaction (Rottermund & Knapik, 2015; Szychowska & Drygas, 2022). Levels of vigor and fitness in old age largely depend on various activities undertaken earlier in life. Years of previous neglect and inactive lifestyle may result in cumulative disabilities in many areas, which might become a major obstacle in undertaking any activity in old age at all (Marchewka & Jungiewicz, 2008). Other hurdles and limitations that seniors face include fear of possible injuries sustained while exercising, lacking skills needed to engage in physical effort, and being nervous about ridicule and judg-

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ment. Due to these and other difficulties that seniors experience in undertaking physical activity on their own, organized activity programs for this age group are gaining popularity (Cunningham & O'Sullivan, 2020; Paterson et al., 2007; Paterson & Warburton, 2010). They bring older people together to collectively perform various types of exercises under the supervision of qualified instructors. Sports centers offer a plethora of classes, such as general physical fitness training, yoga, Pilates, Zumba, Nordic walking, and strengthening spinal muscles, while Universities of the Third Age offer dance lessons, self-defense classes, aqua aerobics, and Gyrokinesis. Exercise must involve simple movements, be safe, not cause excessive strain, but give pleasure and relaxation (Marchewka & Jungiewicz, 2008).

THE POWER OF SELF-ESTEEM

Another important factor contributing to a sense of life satisfaction is self-esteem. Self-image affects the overall satisfaction levels, and also shapes attitudes to life and other people (Fagerström et al., 2007). There are many variables which influence self-image, and one of them is one's environment, which can provide a variety of information about oneself – some of it true, and some false; some positive, and some negative. Due to a number of changes that people undergo as they grow older (psycho-physical, financial, professional, and changes in social roles), older people are particularly vulnerable to a decline in self-esteem. These changes can cause isolation and discrimination, which in turn lower self-esteem and quality of life (Reitz, 2022).

Among the factors influencing self-esteem, human sexuality stands out as significant yet often challenging, particularly for older individuals. Although sexuality is an inherent component of human life at every age, it tends to be marginalized or dismissed when it comes to discussions about the elderly. As people age, they face common difficulties such as health disorders, physical changes, the death of a partner, and a partial loss of autonomy, all of which can undermine their self-esteem. These challenges also directly impact their sexual self-esteem – a crucial aspect of one's overall self-worth and emotional well-being. A particularly important factor that influences how older individuals perceive their sexual attractiveness is their mental state. Aging brings about visible and often unwelcome changes in the body, and becoming acutely aware of these changes can be distressing. The recognition of physical decline can significantly threaten one's sense of self-acceptance and sexuality. For many seniors, this creates a complex internal struggle, where body image concerns erode their confidence in their own sexual desirability. This personal difficulty is only exacerbated by the negative attitudes

that society holds toward the sexuality of older adults. Prevailing ageist stereotypes often dismiss or stigmatize sexual expression in seniors, viewing it as either inappropriate or irrelevant. As a result, discussions surrounding senior sexuality are often shrouded in silence or met with discomfort. Many older people internalize these societal taboos, leading to feelings of shame or embarrassment about their sexual desires or needs. These feelings can provoke anxieties about whether their sexuality will be understood or accepted by their family members and close social circles, thereby contributing to lower self-esteem in this domain (Grabowska, 2009; Ménard, 2014).

Stereotypes, societal pressures, and internalized fears around sexuality create additional barriers for older adults, who already face gender-specific expectations and challenges. For instance, studies have shown that women, in particular, may experience greater pressure regarding physical appearance and sexual desirability as they age. Gender differences in how aging bodies are perceived can further complicate the experience of sexuality in later life, with women often facing more negative scrutiny. However, research also indicates that individuals who maintain a positive body image as they age tend to enjoy higher levels of sexual activity, greater sexual satisfaction, and an overall sense of optimism and better functioning. A positive body image can serve as a protective factor, enhancing both sexual self-esteem and quality of life in older adults (Kijak & Szarota, 2013). Moreover, fostering an open and accepting dialogue about senior sexuality can help challenge societal norms and improve the sexual self-esteem of older individuals. When they feel supported and free from societal judgment, seniors are more likely to embrace their sexuality in a way that is fulfilling and affirming. Studies highlight that positive sexual experiences in later life are not only possible but also linked to overall well-being, with sexual satisfaction contributing to improved mental and emotional health (Montejo, 2023). By dismantling taboos and encouraging more inclusive attitudes, society can play a vital role in bolstering the self-esteem of older adults in the domain of sexuality.

The societal phenomenon of 'the mask of aging' reveals how societal norms shape elderly individuals' perceptions, constraining their true identity, limiting expression of preferences, and fostering fear of judgment and social rejection, often perpetuating negative views of aging and positioning older adults as disempowered and vulnerable (Bouson, 2016). Social media, particularly Twitter, mirror traditional media's ageist narratives, reinforcing existing stereotypes and perceptions of aging and older people (Makita et al., 2021). This concept underscores the evolving standards of physicality among older adults. Alternatively, research on older adults engaged in fitness and dance classes reveals a proactive approach

termed ‘resisting aging actively’, wherein individuals strive to reclaim agency over their bodies, despite age-related diseases or disabilities (Paulson & Willig, 2008; Rodziewicz et al., 2019). Such activities empower women by providing a sense of control over their aging bodies. The complex topic of self-evaluation of the body in old age remains largely unexplored. Subjective assessments of the body vary greatly due to individual differences in valuing physicality and the diverse impacts of aging-related changes. Social beliefs, prejudices, and life events such as the loss of a spouse or illness profoundly influence body image and sexuality, particularly accentuated in women due to societal emphasis on appearance. Maintaining a positive body image in old age necessitates accessing resources or taking proactive measures to regain control over the aging body (Ghillani, 2021).

AIM OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and sexual self-esteem (self-esteem in the area of sexual attractiveness) and the amount of physical activity, as well as the relation between physical activity and a sense of being sexually attractive. Additionally, differences between women and men in terms of these variables were also tracked. To achieve this goal, the following hypotheses were put forward:

H1: The higher the level of sexual self-esteem, the greater the life satisfaction.

H2: The higher the level of physical activity, the greater the life satisfaction.

H3: The higher the level of physical activity, the greater the sexual self-esteem.

H4a: Older women and men demonstrate different levels of physical activity.

H4b: Women and men differ in terms of their sexual self-esteem.

H4c: Women and men have different levels of life satisfaction.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

PARTICIPANTS

We examined 99 persons aged 60-81 ($M = 70.23$, $SD = 5.15$), including 75 women (75.8%) and 24 men (24.2% of the group). Twenty-one persons (21.2%) had a secondary education, and the remaining 78 (78.8%) held a master’s degree. Fifty-one participants (51.5%) were married, 35 (35.4%) were widow or widowers, 8 persons (8.1%) were divorced, and 5 (5.1%) were single (spinsters and bachelors). Everyone in the study group participated in additional classes offered by the Gdansk University of the Third Age.

MEASURES

Life satisfaction. To measure life satisfaction, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985; Polish adaptation by Juczyński, 2001) was used. The questionnaire measures life satisfaction as a feeling of harmony between individual standards and a personal situation. The test consists of five statements regarding one’s life as a whole, to which the respondents reply using a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The reliability of the measurement in this study was .81.

Sexual self-esteem. The measurement tool for sexual self-esteem (self-esteem in the area of sexual attractiveness) was the scale by Magdalena Grabowska (2011) published for the studies collected in her book *Sexuality in early, middle, and late adulthood*. The tool consists of 5 statements exploring the assessment of one’s sexual attractiveness in the following domains: overall opinion, comparing oneself with others, evaluating one’s sexuality in one’s relationship with the partner. The respondents were asked to rate how they felt about the statements using a scale from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). A sample statement taken from this questionnaire reads, “I feel uncomfortable being naked around my partner”. In this study, the reliability of the scale was quite low (.63) and a probable reason for this was that the questionnaire utilized a broad perspective of perceiving the attractiveness of one’s body.

Physical activity level. In order to measure the level of physical activity, a 4-point scale constructed for this study was used; the respondents were asked to position their own level of physical activity on that scale, where 2 = insufficient level of physical activity and 5 = a very good level of physical activity.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY AND STUDY PROCEDURE

The population of participants was created through random sample selection. The study was conducted in May and June 2019. It took part before the classes from the extended offer of the Gdansk University of the Third Age, such as language classes, history lessons, religious studies, creative thinking and memory training workshops, bridge lessons, and sports classes – gymnastics and yoga. All participants agreed to take part in the study, did not receive any remuneration, and remained anonymous.

RESULTS

All variables measured in the study were normally distributed. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and ranges of the variables tested.

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The relationship between life satisfaction and perceived sexual self-esteem was tested using Pearson's r correlation analysis. The relationship between physical activity, life satisfaction and perceived sexual self-esteem was tested using Spearman's ρ . Results of all analyses are presented in Table 2.

The highest correlation was observed between the level of physical activity and life satisfaction ($p < .01$); a significant relationship was also found between sexual self-esteem and life satisfaction, as well

as between the level of physical activity and sexual self-esteem ($p < .01$). The comparison of men's and women's physical activity was carried out using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test (see Table 3).

The comparisons of men's and women's life satisfaction and sexual self-esteem were carried out using Student's t -tests for independent samples (see Table 4). The study failed to confirm the existence of differences in levels of physical activity and life satisfaction between women and men; it did, however, support the notion that men have higher sexual self-esteem than women ($p = .008$).

Table 1

Mean, standard deviation and range of variables tested

	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Physical activity level	2-5	3.62	0.94
Life satisfaction	1-7	4.57	1.00
Sexual self-esteem	1-5	3.23	0.69

Table 2

Relationship between life satisfaction, sexual self-esteem and level of physical activity

	Life satisfaction	Sexual self-esteem
Level of physical activity ^a	.59**	.44**
Sexual self-esteem ^b	.42**	

Note. ^aSpearman's ρ correlation coefficient; ^bPearson's r correlation coefficient; ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Comparison of women and men in terms of physical activity levels

	<i>Me</i>	<i>Q</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Women	4	1	775.0	-1.08	.278
Men	4	1			

Table 4

Comparison of women and men in terms of life satisfaction and sexual self-esteem

	Women <i>n</i> = 75		Men <i>n</i> = 24		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Life satisfaction	4.48	1.04	4.83	0.86	-1.50	97	.137
Sexual self-esteem	3.14	0.73	3.50	0.50	-2.73	56.846	.008

Note. Degrees of freedom in comparing sexual self-esteem were changed because of the lack of equality of variances (Levene's test $F = 4.15$; $p = .044$).

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis about a positive relationship between life satisfaction and sexual self-esteem (H1) was confirmed. Positive self-esteem is one of the factors strongly associated with feelings of satisfaction; accepting oneself and one's body is needed to derive pleasure and positively perceive life. Studies have also shown that high self-esteem promotes health, low levels of depression, and greater life achievements – all these variables are not without significance in perceived well-being (Orth et al., 2010). In older age, self-esteem is a multidimensional concept affected by a number of both internal and external factors. It should be noted that self-esteem is connected with subjective feelings about oneself; therefore it can be strongly affected by life experiences, aging-related changes, illnesses, available comparison criteria, as well as other people's judgments and beliefs. Assessment of one's sexual attractiveness is also a complicated issue, and studying it requires breaking a social taboo. The findings show, however, that exploring the topic of the sexuality of older people is well justified. Society tries to exclude the elderly from discussing sexual life; and yet it was in the last century that Masters and Johnson (1966) proved that human sexuality does not have an 'expiry date' and that its relationship with self-perception and life satisfaction is important even in old age.

Physical activity is another factor that corresponds with the level of life satisfaction as it had

been expected (H2). Successful aging understood as keeping fit and self-dependent, maintaining a low risk of illnesses, and the ability to stay active in various areas of life in old age is one of the goals in human life (Wizner, 2006). What influences all of these functions is physical activity; a lack of it is connected with a decline in fitness, being more dependent on others, often with isolation and loneliness, and even premature death of older people (Bień, 2006). Regular physical exercise has a positive effect on self-perception as well as the attitude to one's environment, and so it can improve quality of life and increase overall satisfaction (Rottermund & Knapik, 2015; Wöbbeking Sánchez et al., 2021). Older people who are physically active are less prone to injuries and cumulative disabilities in various areas of life (Marchewka & Jungiewicz, 2008). Additionally, Wienert et al. (2015) highlight the significance of subjective physical age over chronological age in influencing physical activity levels, which underscores the potential for interventions targeting subjective physical age to promote greater physical activity participation.

The third hypothesis (H3) refers to the influence that physical activity has on sexual self-esteem and was also confirmed by the results of this study. This may mean that leading an active life affects self-image. Those who maintain physical fitness might feel more physically attractive as well as more able, which significantly impacts whether or not one sees oneself as sexually attractive. Given the hypotheses considered above, high levels of physical activity contribute to a positive assessment of life quality, which in turn is closely linked with self-esteem. Moreover, physically active and fit individuals may have a greater sense of control of their bodies and aging processes within. This sense of control can contribute to a greater sense of self-worth and confidence, which are essential components of sexual self-esteem (Paulson & Willig, 2008). Furthermore, the link between physical activity and self-esteem extends beyond the realm of sexuality. High levels of physical activity have been consistently associated with improved overall quality of life. Individuals who prioritize physical fitness often report higher levels of satisfaction and well-being in various domains of life. This positive assessment of life quality is closely intertwined with self-esteem, as individuals who feel content and fulfilled in their daily lives are more likely to possess a positive self-image (Yilidirim & Özgökçe, 2023; Zhang & Chen, 2019).

The hypothesis about the differences between men's and women's levels of physical activity (H4a) was not confirmed. This result contradicts other findings that men demonstrate greater fitness and ability to work and perform everyday activities than do women (Central Statistical Office, 2018; Wizner, 2006). This contradiction may result from how the

studied group was created – all participants were at least fit enough to take classes at the University of the Third Age without assistance, which is why the average level of physical activity was quite high to begin with (between satisfactory and good, as the participants rated it). Furthermore, a more severe decline in women's fitness as compared with men occurs over 85 years of age (Izquierdo et al., 2020; Wizner, 2006), while the age of studied participants ranged from 60 to 81.

The hypothesis about the differences between women and men in perceived life satisfaction (H4b) was not supported, either. Surveys on the quality of life among older Polish people (Waszkiewicz et al., 2012) demonstrated statistically significant differences in how women and men rate their life quality. The results of these studies suggest that the percentage of men who rate their subjective life quality as 'very good' is higher than those of women (who more often view their lives in a negative light). However, a much smaller difference is visible when previous periods of life are compared – here, both genders score similarly. Evaluating one's life as a whole – which is what the employed SWLS test did – could be the reason why our results are different from what other research projects have found. Education also modifies life satisfaction, and the education levels in the studied group were higher than in the general population (21.2% – secondary education, 78.8% – master's degree). This variable could increase average life satisfaction in women, leveling out gender differences. The key factor which undoubtedly has an impact on the results obtained is a small overall number of respondents and the uneven number of women and men (75.8% and 24.2%, respectively).

The only confirmed hypothesis regarding the differences between women and men is the one that assumed both genders differ in how they assess their sexual attractiveness (H4c). We found that when compared with women, men demonstrated higher self-esteem in the area of sexual attractiveness. These results seem to be in keeping with other research exploring male and female sexuality, perception of one's appearance, and general self-esteem (Grabowska, 2011). Women are more critical than men when judging their bodies, more often compare themselves with others, and their appearance becomes a source of anxiety (Ratnasari et al., 2021; Simbar et al., 2020). It has also been demonstrated that in women, self-evaluation of their physical and sexual attractiveness depends on age to a greater extent than in men (Lipowska & Lipowski, 2006). This inequality has its roots in many factors, and one that is very significant is a double standard between women and men in terms of requirements and evaluation criteria. Social judgments are not the only factor, though; the attitude towards one's body is also modified by general self-respect and the level of extraversion, which posi-

tively correlates with sexual self-esteem in women, especially in late adulthood. There have been studies which proved that perceiving one's attractiveness depends not only on actual physical characteristics, but also on the individual's internal factors (Agthe et al., 2023; Hu et al., 2023).

Another issue connected with the fact that men demonstrate higher sexual self-esteem is self-presentation styles. While biological gender is relatively insignificant in choosing a self-presentation style (Wojciszke, 2002), psychological and social genders (measured as the degree of identification with stereotypical masculine and feminine attributes) bear much more weight in this regard. Psychological masculinity has been proved to correlate negatively with self-depreciation and positively with self-presentation. The existence of this relationship may lead men to report a more positive image of their own attractiveness, which does not necessarily wholly reflect the actual level of self-esteem. Women, on the other hand, being more critical of their bodies, scored on average lower than men (Sowan, 2024).

The studied group, composed of students of the University of the Third Age, is an unusual one: with a high percentage of persons with a degree beyond high school, we can expect the participants to be more conscious of aging processes and how to combat them. The group is also characterized by the need to develop and spend time actively, which motivates them to take part in University of the Third Age classes and similar events. These variables may considerably affect both life quality and the level of physical activity, as well as overall self-esteem and sexual self-esteem.

Attention should also be paid to the scores of physical activity levels. The reported levels of physical activity in the studied group were good, but it would be risky to generalize this conclusion to the whole population of older people, given the data provided by the Central Statistical Office (2018) indicating that only 25.1% of individuals over 60 engage in sports activity. Other weaknesses of the study are the small sample size (99 individuals) and the uneven distribution of women and men. This distribution, however, reflects the fact that men rarely engage in classes organized by the University of the Third Age and other similar organizations which aim to bring older people together to activate them socially, cognitively, and physically. This low percentage of male participants may be due to demographic characteristics (shorter life span) or cultural patterns. Aside from this, the conducted survey studied persons between 60 and 81 years of age, i.e. the so-called Third Age population. Studying the Fourth Age (over 75 years of age) could yield very different results (Morgulec-Adamowicz et al., 2011). Even though both groups are referred to as 'older people', differences between these two age brackets need to be clearly delineated.

Although significant and possibly affecting the results achieved, the above-mentioned methodological weaknesses do not negate the existence of the relationships between the studied variables found in the population of older people.

There are additional limitations to the current study. First, employment status was not assessed, which could potentially influence the results, as employment offers opportunities for social interaction, engagement in activities, and self-actualization. Second, the sexual self-esteem scale showed a low reliability score. Therefore, it is important to alert readers that this measure may be less reliable and potentially less trustworthy when interpreting outcomes related to sexual self-esteem.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal several key relationships between physical activity, sexual self-esteem, and life satisfaction. Higher levels of sexual self-esteem are strongly linked to greater life satisfaction, underscoring the importance of self-perception in one's overall sense of well-being. Similarly, individuals who engage in higher levels of physical activity tend to experience greater life satisfaction, highlighting the benefits of maintaining an active lifestyle. Moreover, increased physical activity is also associated with enhanced sexual self-esteem, suggesting a positive feedback loop between body confidence and sexual well-being.

While gender differences exist in the relationships between physical activity and life satisfaction, they are relatively minor. However, one notable distinction is that men, on average, exhibit higher self-esteem in the area of sexual attractiveness when compared to women. This difference may reflect broader societal norms and expectations regarding gender and appearance. Although these relationships between the variables are not unexpected, they offer valuable insights into the lives of older individuals, a group that is often overlooked or generalized by society. Older adults are frequently denied the recognition of their individuality, particularly in areas related to activity and sexuality. This study helps paint a more nuanced picture of aging, emphasizing that these dimensions of life – physical activity, sexuality, and overall well-being – are not solely the domain of youth. Instead, they remain integral aspects of life at every stage.

This research can serve as a foundation for future studies that further explore the connections between activity, sexuality, and quality of life, not only among older populations but also across age groups. It also encourages society to reconsider its attitudes toward these facets of life, which, while often associated with youth, are universal experiences.

DISCLOSURES

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