

Section: Special articles

SEXUALITY IN OLD PEOPLE POSITIVE AND TRANSCULTURAL APPROACH



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Abstract

"Love is just like a beautiful and precious Glass. If you hold it tight, it will break, if you hold it loosely, it will still break."

In many cultures, the sexuality of the elderly is taboo. This article outlines the important aspects of understanding the sexuality of old people using a holistic method. The various aspects of educative, cultural, religious, and sociological elements are exposed in a transcultural perspective.

Keywords: Positive Psychotherapy, sexuality, transcultural, cultural understanding, intimacy, morality

Introduction:

Sexuality in old age

Many cultures and countries will experience an aging population in the coming years and decades. Topics such as sexuality, love, death, and religion are likely to remain private matters and continue to be considered taboo. Additionally, it is important to clarify certain terms related to sexuality, including "eros" and "sexuality." Eros is a term related to various love experiences and relationships. Eros can be understood as follows. A love affair with people, animals, religion, Work, Money, Knowledge, Possession, and nature.

The word sexuality comes from the Latin "secare," meaning to cut or separate. "Sectus" – separation, distinction. The term sexuality has only been used in connection with eroticism or erotic acts of humans since the 20th century. Words such as coitus anal intercourse, masturbation (masturbation), orgasm, genitalia, oral sex, sadism, and masochism have arisen from this application. Sexuality has to do with urges, lust, longing fantasies, or emotionality.

Methodology

2.1. Positive Therapeutic Assessment of Sexuality

From today's point of view and research, Sexuality in (old) people or sexuality at different ages depends on various factors. Using the Balance model of Nossart Peseschkian, e.g., biological factors, genetic make-up, lifestyle, religious affiliation, and the social ideal of beauty.

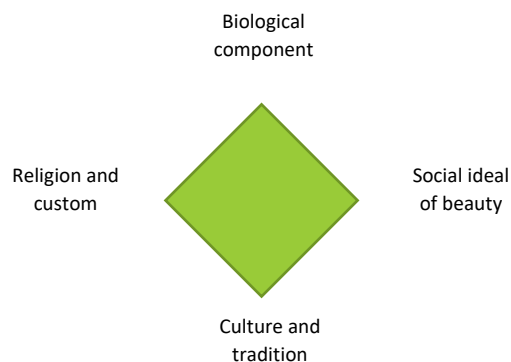


Figure 1. Balance model by N. Peseschkian

The above divisions of understanding how Sexuality is perceived allow us to reflect on our sexuality from 4 aspects of the balance system and perhaps develop and see new impulses or tools in dealing with sexuality in old age. (See the diagram)

2.1. Bodily Connotation or Aspects of Sexuality

Our culture in Europe is neither relaxed nor affectionate culture. Rather, I have the feeling that I live in an uptight culture where Intimacy a private matter is, and pretense of chastity and high morality prevail. Nevertheless, my observations in my therapeutic work in the last 20 to 30 years have exposed the magnitude of the pornographic culture of permissiveness. In this culture, the principle that governs decisions on Sexuality is all or nothing. In a culture where sexuality is experienced as either debauchery or abstinence, there isn't much in between.

In my research into sexuality, I found something surprising. The problem actually lies in the question of truthfulness and finding reality. All human beings are two different beings, so to speak. Namely the animalistic and the mental or spiritual character. Dealing with both decides whether we can deal with our sexuality. For example, if we choose the animalistic way of life, then we must include some important characteristics in our sexuality. These are characteristics such as spontaneity, distinctiveness, and the use of sense organs such as smell, sight, hearing, touch, and embrace. This also means that the conquest battles and fights of ownership are essential. Animals know no old or young categories; they only sense gender. Amazingly, the playful component in animal sexual encounters is very fascinating, and I think that's where our big problem lies. How can we deal with these properties? How can we learn to interpret the feeling within us and to use it correctly? At this point, the first split in sexuality begins. We sometimes pretend that, on the one hand, we want and desire these important qualities of sexuality, and on the other hand, we are unwilling to incorporate them into life. One often hears, mostly from women, that the sexual act is too fast for them; there is no tenderness, no foreplay, no caressing, no smell, no touching, etc. whether we are willing to develop models so our children can use these important animalistic Behavioral patterns in sexuality and include them in education.

2.2. Achievement and Social Connotation or Aspects of Sexuality

Sexuality is always socially conditioned. Unfortunately, we always find two extreme poles in the human way of life of sexuality. Some cultures see sex as a necessary evil. Sexuality is basically demonized as an invention of evil. Everything physical is labeled as a sin. A strict boundary is drawn between body and soul. Here, some religions are world champions in proclaiming hostility to the body. Women's menstruation or intercourse are condemned as dirty life experiences. They then develop many norms to punish apostates. For example, the different marriage rituals dealing with nudity and chastity ideologies show the different views and beliefs of sexuality.

Other cultures see sex as pleasure; they want to propagate sex as a liberated human event. Sexuality is marketed. By duplicating and distributing sex and pornography, they seek to portray sexuality as something simply natural or harmless. For example, these cultures own TV channels and different social media to propagate Sexuality as a business culture. In addition, in this culture, which is geared towards consumption and performance, people are almost inevitably brought up to be selfish automatons. They think the world is only there to satisfy our appetites. The world is a giant apple, a giant bottle, a giant breast, and we are the infants forever waiting, forever hoping, and forever disappointed. Our sexuality is naturally set up to deceive and to receive, trade, and consume.

2.3. Belief Connotation or Aspects of Sexuality

The second major problem is that we humans are spiritual and mental beings. We can apply everything we have experienced in the past to the present. We are shaped, so to speak, by our experiences and our history. Even our own experiences can influence our actions. We can say whether someone met us with joy or hatred, benevolence or rejection, severity or openness. We sense our feelings and can see what they mean. We interpret our behavior to determine whether something is okay or against custom, morality, or the fabric of our culture. Our experience accompanies us and influences our future decisions. There is actually an indescribable power here that influences our

sexual activity. Dealing with this power can be learned, whether we prefer or avoid a particular sexual relationship.

Because of these above qualities (animalistic/spiritual) that we possess, so many insecurities and fears affect our sexual perceptions and behavior. So many old people have never accepted their bodies, let themselves be touched, or touched others. Most Humans do not cultivate a culture of sexuality and have not learned to deal with their body's signals. Some endorse rather the Technicalities of sexual practice.

Guilt arises when we emphasize only one aspect of life: animalistic or spiritual. For example, by only seeing the physical aspects of sex, there is a danger of losing the sense of shame that could help us to be ourselves and embrace our natural way of life without endangering others and without being judged. Especially if he/she shares his/her sexuality with somebody who doesn't accept physical touch, this fear of judgment is the real problem. Statements like: you are like an animal, you are obscene, etc., actually show the insecurity in our culture when it comes to dealing with body attachment alone. The hippie movement and the culture of Bagwan failed because of these prejudices. (Internet 1970)

The overemphasis on mental and spiritual qualities in sexuality makes people very insecure about enjoying their physical sexual needs. The body is seen as an enemy, a prison, a devil, and a handicap, and when the various disappointments, failures, and tensions of sexuality arise, we experience fear and despair. Many then tend to suppress the physical signals in sexuality and tend to interpret the physical impulses differently, and, above all, they look for reasons for rejecting the sexual encounter. To this day, premarital sex is portrayed as a bad way of life in some cultures. Many parents are still unsure and insecure whether their children are doing the right thing or not.

Cases:

Transcultural Case Studies

The problem will be examined through case studies and texts, maintaining a consistently holistic perspective. This article presents sexuality as described by Jean-Claude Guillebaud (1998): "Desire whom you will, but always make

sure that the choice is your own." True freedom is achieved when contemporary trends do not dictate life and sexuality. Humans in this 21st century tend to experience their Sexuality in these two above-mentioned extreme poles, on one hand, bodily and the other hand, social and spiritual. Today, there is a loss of one's own sexual identity. Because identity is the guardian of one's own space, one's personal sphere, one's limits, and one's instincts. I believe that in many families and cultures, there is no right or wrong education on sexuality anymore. Many try to emphasize the physical importance of sex, some the spiritual, ethical, or moral, and others the social. No objective understanding of what sexuality is. I think it's part of seeing the whole thing. What is sexuality? Does it have to do with marriage alone, with partnership, with lust, with physical beauty, with quality of life, with procreation, with Abstinence, etc.? We want to start by questioning the different cultures and their understanding of sexuality. I have chosen three cultures to represent this tension between guilt and pleasure: 1) Austrian culture, 2) Ibo culture, and 3) Hausa culture.

Our lives and experiences of sexuality in early childhood and later in the course of our upbringing determine the way and manner of our attitude toward our sexual behavior. The example of the parents is very paramount and important in affirming one's gender, dealing responsibly with gender and physical development, avoiding traditional role models and clichés, using the appropriate language, considerate understanding of the partner, and finally, openly caring out and dealing with conflicts and problems on sexuality. All of the above behavioral patterns are of the utmost importance in educating the adolescent, which nowadays use social media to imbibe their sexual behavior.

3.1. Understanding of sexuality in some cultures: Case studies

Austrian culture

Judith 71 years

My sexuality is there, but I don't show it. When you're young, the tendency is fabulously outrageous, and it doesn't matter who you sleep with. My first love affair fell during the war. If this relationship had become a partnership, everything would have been different. Then, I would certainly be a much happier person today.

For a time after his death, the joy of sex was so strong that I made love with many partners. Sometimes, the ones I liked, sometimes the ones I just had an opportunity with. I didn't need to be in a special relationship at all. Just having sex together was something so elementary.

At 33, I married a man with whom my sexual bond was not particularly strong. In other areas, especially in art, we had such a strong connectedness and sense of who the other was that we were very close. That is what has brought us together to this day. Then the two children came, and my husband was very busy with his job. I finished my studies when the children were small. I had little time for him and was always tired. We rarely went out for other social activities. It certainly wasn't good for our relationship.

Our love life would probably have turned out better if we hadn't had children if the burden of the family had not been so heavy that the other side could hardly be lived. We were so busy that our sexuality took a back seat. That, of course, was a flaw in our marriage, a deficiency from which I suffered greatly. We talked about it, but nothing came out of it. This generation of men is not used to talking about their feelings.

Our sex life was never what I wanted it to be. And it never was. As a result, the whole thing fizzled out, and at 50, we're both the same age, we stopped having sex altogether. I suffered a lot and assumed that I had failed to make him a lover. That I was the one who didn't delight him. I then moved away from Hamburg; separation was necessary because I couldn't stand it anymore. This lack of sexual satisfaction was unbearable. Of course, we could have divorced, but our sense of togetherness was too strong. We just left everything open. I also hoped that by being physically separated, I could put our sex life back together. When the day-to-day odds and ends go away, that could reinvigorate our relationship into a honeymoon of sorts. But it was of no use. We stayed married anyway. My husband has defeated me in his field of art. He's superior to me there. That kept me by his side for a lifetime. In terms of sexual vitality, however, I am far superior to him. Or maybe I'm just not the woman he needed in bed. That remains in the dark. We'll never find out.

What I don't like about him is that sex doesn't play a big role for him. And for me, harmony in bed is so important not only because of the appeal of the highlights but also as an

opportunity to turn to the other, as devotion and rapprochement. I experienced this harmony between body and soul with this man who remained in the war. He was the only one in my life who had everything right. And I've been longing for it ever since. I used to masturbate a lot, and sometimes I still do, but of course, I'd rather have a man. Now and then, I see one that I like. But at seventy, the options are simply limited.

I'm not interested in my peers. I like them, and there is an immediate closeness through the community of generations. It has nothing to do with sexual attraction. The clever men I could love don't love me; they want a counterpart. I overwhelm them with my intelligence and my assertiveness. Those I cared about couldn't handle a strong-minded woman. I suppress my longing for tenderness, for sexuality; that is a point of great unhappiness in my life. (Daimler,1999 page.174).

Ibo culture

Ikem 71 years

In my culture, a woman is circumcised as a baby; they want to beautify her vagina, so that was the explanation. This act was incomprehensible to me as a young person. In my family, when a woman experiences menstruation for the first time, there is a big market festival for the women in my village. We paint and tattoo our bodies. The menstrual dance is rhythmic, and the chants are very harmonious. We young girls experience our womanhood and the presence of all the villagers, who honor our motherhood. This festival influenced my sexuality a lot. I am accepted as a woman and, most importantly, a mother. My marriage is such that the whole family has to agree before I marry. Our marriage is not for love in the sense of self-determination but whether that person suits the clan. We are responsible for the reproduction of the clan. I then had seven children. For me, lust and orgasm were not a concept. I am taken care of by the clan, my children grow up in the clan, and my husband could also have relationships with other women, but after his death, I am permitted to have sexual relationships with other men in the clan. Sexuality is mostly experienced in the dark. There were no prohibitions or commandments, but the women were recognized as contributors to the clan's population. As a woman, I could say that the spiritual and the physical initiation are

more emphasized than the emotional and joyous points in sexuality.

Hausa culture

Harona 68 years

I come from a Muslim family. My parents were strict Muslims. And my father married three women. My mother was the eldest. We were five siblings. My circumcision was torture. I was circumcised at the age of twelve, at the beginning of my period and mensuration. It hurt me a lot. I could never forget this excruciating experience. I couldn't resist because my mother said it was the custom and Tradition. My father had already chosen a man for me to marry. Virginity is a condition and sine qua non of marriage. It would be a shame for me and my family if I had had premarital sex. It's a husband's privilege to be the first to break my virginity. On the wedding day, he must show in front of all those present that the blood is present in the intercourse. Pain, not pleasure, is the most important thing here.

My marriage was childless, which brought me so much rejection from my husband's relatives. But because I was an industrious woman and had a lot of money, they were able to accept me. We don't have an absolute divorce. If my husband doesn't want me anymore, he can let me go, but he has to support me. I could have sexual relations with other men if I wanted, but always in secret. For me, the experience of sexuality was only to see if I could have children. Now that I'm an old woman, I do not need a sexual relationship. Now and then, some men come to me for advice. I am not alone.

Conclusion

It is an inexplicable phenomenon that sexual intimacy (eros) is associated with death or deadly experiences. For example, history teaches us that.

Delilah killed Samson because Samson was intimate with her. David killed Uriah so that he could marry his wife. Oedipus killed his father and married his mother.

There are so many stories in the headlines of today's press and social media where men or women kill their loved ones when they want to separate from them. Love can also kill. 90% of the perpetrators are mostly men. Women try to go other ways. They can kill themselves or

somehow take it lightly when abandoned. Sometimes, they seek consultations.

This aspect that love can kill has to be taken into account in sexuality in old age in different cultures. Especially when considering "sexual abnormalities in old age," we have to ask the question: To what extent did this principle play a role in the development of the respective sexuality? Suppose the person has experienced sexuality over a longer period of his/her time, for example, through jealousy, oppression, or abuse. In that case, there is a risk that the desire for sexuality could be suppressed and denied. In this painful experience, old people will automatically no longer be able to dare to do something new. Many people who have experienced threats or beatings related to sexuality are likely to be unable to show and articulate their sexual needs at this age. Physical touch becomes torture.

"Love is the best medicine," said the great doctor Paracelsus almost 500 years ago. However, the realization of intimate relationships stands in the way of the fact that society today still expects that old people no longer have any sexual feelings. So it happens that old people are often treated with the statement that they are "beyond good and evil" - and not only by younger people but also by older people who say this about themselves, as if the concepts of good and evil were only tailored to the sexual realm and that there was no good or bad anywhere else in the world. Psychologically, it is not so easy to pick up and heal the sexual problems of the elderly. That's why it's important to address a few key factors in order to strategize. These factors are:

1. The physical powers of the elderly (body perception, body language, experience of body touch).
2. Develop bonding strategies (relationship skills).
3. Stress reduction (body, performance, contacts, future)
4. Biography in the sexual area.
5. Worldview and Values
6. Illness situation
7. Wishes and dreams
8. The special properties (resources)
9. Goals in life (does he/she still have a goal in sexuality?).

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