ABSTRACT

Sexual functioning and sexual dysfunctions of female students of Polish universities - a multidimensional analysis of relational and behavioral predictors and the role of sex toys.

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Background: The period of emerging adulthood among university students is a critical time for forming stable sexual behaviors and intimate scripts. Despite this, Polish literature lacks population-based studies evaluating the sexual functioning of young, healthy women that comprehensively integrate relational and behavioral factors (including risky sexual behaviors) and the impact of using sex toys, which are gaining increasing popularity

Material and Methods: An exploratory, cross-sectional survey study involved 199 sexually active female students from Polish universities. The assessment was based on an original questionnaire covering selected aspects of sexual life and the use of erotic devices, as well as standardized research tools, including the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) and the Sexual Risk Survey (SRS).

Results: The risk of clinically significant sexual dysfunction (according to the FSFI scale) applies to 35.2% of the surveyed students. The most frequently reported problems included difficulties in achieving orgasm and dyspareunia. Predictors of a higher overall FSFI score were a higher frequency of intercourse, fewer subjective symptoms of dysfunction, and general satisfaction with intimate life. The perception of premature ejaculation symptoms in a partner correlated with lower satisfaction and difficulties in achieving orgasm in women. The use of sex toys during masturbation was shown to influence the desire and lubrication domains, while their regular incorporation into a partnered relationship was associated with a significant improvement in the global FSFI score and the satisfaction domain. Concurrently, a subjective sense of necessity to use a gadget to achieve orgasm emerged as a negative predictor for the arousal, lubrication, and orgasm domains, reflecting a compensatory mechanism for baseline physiological difficulties, though it did not adversely affect the global sexual functioning score.

At the same time, a higher frequency of using sex toys and early sexual initiation co-occurred with a greater propensity for risk-taking behaviors.

Conclusions: The sexual functioning of Polish female students exhibits a strong dependence on dyadic relationships and technological exploration. The utilization of sex toys constitutes an effective strategy supporting the physiology of the female sexual response; their role extends beyond the autosexual sphere, serving as a significant factor optimizing the quality of intercourse and intimate well-being within a partnered relationship. Relying on mechanical stimulation to reach climax mostly serves an adaptive purpose rather than representing a global impairment of intimate life quality. Due to its correlation with an increased openness to behavioral risk, this phenomenon highlights an urgent need to implement targeted education regarding the hygiene of intimate technologies and preventive healthcare for young adults.

Key words: sexual health, female sexual dysfunction, sexual risk behaviour, sex toys, partnered relationship, premature ejaculation, young adults.