

OLDER AUSTRALIANS' SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOURS

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Background:

STIs are rising among older adults, and changes in sexual function can present new challenges as people age. Older Australians need access to relevant and appealing sexual health information, however there are few resources for older demographics. We are conducting a survey of older adults that aims to investigate their sexual health information seeking behaviour.

Methods:

Data are being collected using an anonymous online survey which commenced in April 2021 (ends 31st May 2021). Participants aged 60+ and living in Australia are eligible to participate. Both quantitative and qualitative data are being collected.

Results:

We have received 298 responses to date, representing all states and territories. The average age is 72 (range 60-89), 61% are female, the majority are heterosexual (78%) and just over half report being sexually active (52%). Almost half have sought sexual health information since turning 60 (44%). Respondents have mainly sought information from a General Practitioner or other healthcare providers, while the second most common is health information websites. Other websites, books/magazines, and talking to friends are also common. Overall, respondents do not seek sexual health information on social media. Of those who have not sought sexual health information, most say they do not need it, however, a minority say they are embarrassed or do not know where to look. Of those who have sought information, one third do not find what they are looking for, or find the information incomplete (31%), while 57% receive satisfactory answers to their questions.

Conclusion:

Older adults continue to have questions related to sexual health. The finding that one third do not receive adequate answers to their questions suggests a need for more sexual health resources that are relevant to older Australians. These resources must be non-stigmatising and in a range of formats to ensure equity of access.

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