

Intimacy: The elusive fountain of youth?

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(HealthDay)—People seeking more satisfaction in their later years might find sex is the spice of life, new research suggests.

For the study, researchers analyzed survey data from nearly 6,900 [older adults](#), average age 65, in England. The investigators found that those who said they'd had any type of [sexual activity](#) in the previous 12 months had higher life enjoyment scores than those who weren't sexually active.

Among women, kissing, petting and fondling more often, as well as feeling emotionally close to their partner during sex, was associated with a higher enjoyment of life. But there was not a significant association between [sexual intercourse](#) and enjoyment of life.

Among men, satisfaction with their sex life and how often they had sexual intercourse was associated with greater enjoyment of life.

"The findings of our study suggest that it may be beneficial for physicians to query geriatric patients about their sexual activity and offer help for sexual difficulties, such as problems with erections, as sexual activity helps [older people](#) live more fulfilling lives," said study co-leader Lee Smith. He is a

reader in exercise medicine at Anglia Ruskin University in England.

"Previous research has suggested that frequent sexual intercourse is associated with a range of benefits for psychological and physiological well-being, such as improved quality of life and [mental health](#), and lower risk of certain cancers and fatal coronary events," Smith said in a university news release.

"Health professionals should acknowledge that older adults are not asexual, and that a frequent and problem-free sex life in this population is related to better well-being," Smith added.

"However, encouragement to try new positions and explore different types of sexual activities is not regularly given to aging populations."

The study was published Dec. 12 in the journal *Sexual Medicine*.

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health has more on [older adults and sexual health](#).

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