TAKING CONFIDENTIAL SEXUAL HISTORY

How comfortable are you?

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Objectives

At the end of this presentation, the participants will be able to:

- State the importance / reasons for taking effective sexual history
- Identify the components of sexual history
- Demonstrate effective communication skills in sexual history taking.
Introduction

- Sexual health has profound influence over the individual’s physical and psychological wellbeing
- The global ramifications of STIs and HIV are evident in both social and economic terms
- Sexual history taking holds the key to the practice of sexual health medicine—basis for treatment, education and sexual health promotion
Why Take Sexual History?

- Identify and treat sexual dysfunction
- Strategy for primary and secondary prevention of STIs, including HIV
- Information that will guide STI risk reduction.
- To identify the anatomic sites that are appropriate/suitable for STD screening
Why Take Sexual History?

- Improve opportunity for early diagnosis, treatment of STDs and prevent associated morbidity
- Answer patient’s personal questions about sexual Health.
- Identification of persons at higher risk for unplanned pregnancies, STIs and victim(s) of sexual abuse

Global and Economic impact of STIs

- 20 Million new STD infections a year
- Annual direct cost 16 Billion dollars
- 1.2 Million persons - 13 years and older are living with HIV infection
  - Including 156,300 (12.8%) who are unaware of their infection.
- 50,000 new HIV infections annually
- Estimated lifetime cost of treating HIV is $379,000 (in 2010 dollars)
  - CDC, 2015
- In 2006, 49% of pregnancies were unintended
- Over 3 million persons infected with Hep C
Question
Are You Taking the Sexual History of Your Patients?
Sexual History taking and STI screening in patients initiating erectile Dysfunction medication Therapy

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age (range), y</td>
<td>57.4 (26–83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status, n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>133 (52.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Divorced/Separated</td>
<td>85 (33.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>21 (8.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>13 (5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity, n (%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>137 (54.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>108 (42.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7 (2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic*</td>
<td>247 (99.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comorbidities, n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD</td>
<td>38 (15.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>68 (27.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>180 (71.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peripheral vascular disease</td>
<td>9 (3.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renal insufficiency</td>
<td>10 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>4 (1.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any substance use†, n (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>105 (84.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>60 (48.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>19 (15.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provider type, n (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary care</td>
<td>222 (88.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urology</td>
<td>12 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18 (7.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No data available for 4 patients.
†No data available for 2 patients.
CAD indicates coronary artery disease.

Holman, Katherine et al, 2013 STD vol 40(11) P836 -838
### Sexual Health Screening During the 24 months Surrounding Erectile Dysfunction medication Prescription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline (n* = 176)</th>
<th>Initial (n* = 240)</th>
<th>Follow-Up (n* = 166)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual history</td>
<td>3 (1.7)</td>
<td>7 (2.9)</td>
<td>5 (2.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk counseling</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (0.8)</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ED effect assessed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>43/219 (19.6)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Data not available for some patients at baseline, initial, and/or follow-up. N/A indicates not applicable.*

Holman, Katherine et al, 2013 STD vol 40(11) P836 -838
STI Screening During the 24 months Surrounding Erectile Dysfunction medication Prescription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STI Screening</th>
<th>Baseline (n = 252)</th>
<th>Follow-Up (n = 250)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. trachomatis</td>
<td>5 (2.0)</td>
<td>6 (2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. gonorrhoea</td>
<td>6 (2.4)</td>
<td>6 (2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syphilis</td>
<td>25 (9.9)</td>
<td>18 (7.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>7 (2.8)</td>
<td>12 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSV-2</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*n = number of patients screened.

Holman, katherine et al, 2013 STD vol 40(11) P836 -838
What We Don't Talk about When We Don't Talk about Sex:
Results of a National Survey of U.S. Obstetrician/Gynecologists

- 1,154 practicing U.S. ob/gyns (53% male; mean age 48 years) was surveyed regarding their practices of communication with patients about sex. Survey response rate was 65.6%.
- 63% routinely assess patients' sexual activities;
- 40% routinely asked about sexual problems.
- 28.5% asked about sexual satisfaction
- 27.7% asked about sexual orientation/identity
- 13.8% asked about pleasure with sexual activity
- 25% of ob/gyns reported they had expressed disapproval of patients' sexual practices.

Why are we not taking Sexual History?

- Lack of understanding of relevance of sexual health to overall health
- Uneasiness of clinicians and patients with a difficult and sensitive subject
- Lack of time
- Fear of offending the patient
Questions
Principles involved in taking a Sexual History

• Ensure privacy and confidentiality.
• Be professional.
• Be open minded and non-judgmental.
• Recognize non-verbal cues.
• Ask only appropriate questions.
• Explain procedures and treatments thoroughly.

Jones, R and Barton R: Introduction to taking and principles of sexual Health(2004).
PostGrad Med. J 80:444-446
Components of Sexual History

- Assessment of symptoms to guide examination and testing
- Exposure history to identify sites for sampling
- Assessment for contraception use and risk of pregnancy
- Assessment of other sexual health issues, including psychosexual problems
Components of Sexual History

- Assess for risks - HIV, hepatitis A, B and C - for both testing and prevention
- Assessment of risky behavior- facilitate health promotion activity, including partner notification and sexual health promotion
Minimum Consideration in Sexual History taking

- Symptoms / reason for visit
- Date of last sexual contact
- Partner’s gender, anatomic sites of exposure
- Condom use, suspected infection, infection risk or symptoms in partner
- Total number of partners
Minimum consideration in Sexual History taking

- Previous STIs
- Vaccination history
- Past medical and surgical history
- Current medications and drug allergies
- Recognition of gender-based violence
- Alcohol and recreational drug use
- Agree on the method of giving result
Minimum consideration in Sexual History taking

- For women- Last menstrual Period, pattern, and Pap smear history
- Review of Symptoms ...
- Identify unmet contraception need and pregnancy risks
- Difficulties with sexual performance and satisfaction
- Family history and smoking history
Minimum consideration in Sexual History taking

- For Men
- Review of symptoms...
- Contraception, including contraception use by female partners.
- Identification of unmet needs with regard to difficulties with sexual performance and satisfaction
Questions
Effective Communication Skills

- Initial contact with the patient is important for obtaining an accurate sexual history. Pay attention to the following;
- Initial greeting of the patient
- Maintain eye contact
- Ask for the patient’s permission to open discussion – sensitive and personal subject
Effective Communication skills

- Start with open-ended questions
- Use closed-ended questions – to elicit specific information
- Use language that is appropriate.
Effective Communication skills

- Non-judgmental
- Be respectful and sensitive
- Gender identity and orientation
- Be aware of non-verbal cues
- Be sensitive to cultural issues
- Listen attentively- use clarification and validation techniques
The 5 “Ps” of Sexual Health

- Partners
- Practices
- Protection from STIs
- Past History of STIs
- Prevention of pregnancy

The 5 “Ps” of Sexual Health

- Partners
- Practices
- Protection from STDS
- Past History of STDs
- Prevention of Pregnancy
Partners

- Number and gender of partner(s)
- Length of relationship
- Partner’s risk factors
- Explore condom use or lack of
Dialogue - Partners

- Are you currently sexually active?

- How many partners have you had in the last 30, 60, 90 days and in the last one year?

- Are your partners male, female or both?

- Do you have vaginal sex, meaning penis in the vagina; oral sex meaning penis in your mouth or anal sex meaning penis in your anus
The 5 “Ps” of Sexual History

- Partners
- Practices
- Protection from STIS
- Past History of STIs
- Prevention of Pregnancy
Practices

- Sexual practices will guide the assessment of patient’s risks, including drug use
- risk-reduction strategies and vaccinations
- the determination of necessary testing/ identification of anatomical sites for STD testing.
Dialogue - Practices

- I am going to be more explicit here about the kind of sex you’ve had over the last 12 months to better understand if you are at risk for STDs.

- What kind of sexual contact do you have or have you had? Genital (penis in the vagina)? Anal (penis in the anus)? Oral (mouth on penis, vagina, or anus)?
The 5 “Ps” of Sexual History

- Partners
- Practices
- Protection from STIs
- Past History of STIs
- Prevention of Pregnancy
Protection from STIs

- Explore the subjects of abstinence, monogamy, condom use, the patient’s perception of his or her own risk and his or her partner’s risk, and the issue of testing for STDs.
- Explore the need for vaccinations; HPV, Hep A and B
Dialogue - Protection from STIs

- Do you and your partner(s) use any protection against STDs? If not, could you tell me the reason? If yes, what kind of protection do you use?

- How often do you use this protection? If “sometimes,” in what situations or with whom do you use protection?
The 5 “Ps” of Sexual History

- Partners
- Practices
- Protection from STIs
- Past History of STIs
- Prevention of Pregnancy
Past History of STIs

- Record history of previous STIs
- Previous STIs increase risk of future STIs
- Date of diagnosis and treatment
- If syphilis- stage, RPR titer and treatment
Dialogue - Past History of STIs

- Have you ever been diagnosed with an STD? When? How were you treated?

- Have you had any recurring symptoms or diagnoses?

- Have you ever been tested for HIV, or other STDs?

- Has your current partner or any former partners ever been diagnosed or treated for an STD? Were you tested for the same STD(s)?

- If yes, were you treated?
The 5 “Ps” of Sexual History

- Partners
- Practices
- Protection from STDS
- Past History of STDs
- Prevention of Pregnancy
Prevention of Pregnancy

- Ask About contraceptive use and compliance
- Identify pregnancy or pregnancy risk
- Avoid drugs contraindicated in pregnancy
- Provide contraceptive education
- Identify unmet contraceptive use – including emergency contraception.
- Ask men about contraception and provide information – male methods of contraception
Dialogue - Prevention of Pregnancy

- Are you currently trying to conceive or father a child?

- Are you concerned about getting pregnant or getting your partner pregnant?

- Are you using contraception or practicing any form of birth control? Do you need any information on birth control?
Concluding Sexual History Dialogue

- Thank the patient for his / her time and cooperation
- **What other things about your sexual health and sexual practices should we discuss to help ensure your good health?**
- **What other concerns or questions regarding your sexual health or sexual practices would you like to discuss?**
- **Establish how test result will be communicated**
Conclusion

Sexual history taking is the foundation for:

- Gaining information regarding the patient’s risks and routes for acquiring an infection.
- Setting the agenda for risk reduction counseling.
- Treatment of STI and associated morbidity.
- It is an essential skill that all clinicians must strive to improve for the general health of the patient and the community.
References

- Brook, Gary et al: 2013. UK National Guidelines for Consultations Requiring Sexual History taking:
- Clinical Effectiveness Group. British Association for Sexual health and HIV
- King, C et al. Sexual Risk Behaviors and Sexually Transmitted Infection Prevalence in an Outpatient Psychiatry Clinic.
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