

**Aleksandar Štulhofer, PhD**

*Sexology Unit, Dept. of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb*

## WOMEN'S SEXUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF AGEING AND MENOPAUSE

*Aim:* To provide an overview of epidemiological data on the association between menopause and ageing, and women's sexual function and sexual satisfaction, as well as to identify culture-specific barriers to adequate response to these challenges among health professionals.

*Method:* An overview of international and local research on ageing/menopause and women's sexual health; critical analysis of cultural obstacles and professional limitations facing medical assistance to ageing women's sexual function.

*Results:*

Both ageing and menopausal transition (particularly surgical menopause) have been systematically associated with sexual function. Decrease in sexual desire, arousal, and orgasmic function, as well as an increased risk of sexual pain disorders, are frequent problems affecting ageing women. Importantly, a number of personal, interpersonal, and sociocultural aspects affect sexual life of older women in addition to hormonal and biological factors.

*Conclusions:*

Sexual satisfaction in women is significantly associated with life satisfaction, relationship, and general well-being. Considering the associations between aging/menopause and sexual health, sexual function of menopausal women should be routinely assessed in clinical practice in order to preserve quality of life across the ageing process. Time-efficient assessment and counseling models, such as the Cornell Model (Perelman, 2003), should be included in medical training to ensure that more attention is paid to sexual health issues in daily clinical practice.