

Introduction

Research on sexuality and bleeding disorders is lacking, although bleeding caused by sexual activity seems to be rare, but psoas bleedings may occur in young adults, after repeated intensive sexual activity. Moreover in the beginning the bleeding may not be recognised due to sexual arousal. Patients with arthropathy have often limited joint function and pain which also might affect sexuality. So not much is known about sexual experiences in patients with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders. But from people with rheumatoid arthritis it is known that their sexuality is impaired due to pain and disability and women are less sexual active during menstruation.

Aim

- to investigate whether sexuality in patients with increased bleeding tendency was affected by their bleeding disorder.
- Is there something special about their sexuality
- Can we improve guidance and intervention

Material and Methods:

six patients from different age groups, five men with severe haemophilia A (HA) or B (HB) and one woman with type 3 von Willebrand disease, (vWD) were interviewed. Questions on relationship and sexual activity were asked.

Results

Table 1 experiences with sexuality in patients with a bleeding disorder

	Male HA 21 years	Male HA 30 years	Male HA 45 years	Female vWD 59 years	Male HA 62 years	Male HA 68 years
Homo/hetero sexual	hetero	hetero	homo	hetero	hetero	hetero
Viral infection	No	No	HCV	No	HIV	HCV in the past
relationship	Now and then	married	Lives together	married	single	married
Problems getting a relationship	no	no	no	no	yes	no
tell- friend about bleeding disorder	At start	At start	At start	Later, but before marriage	NA	At start
Afraid of bleeding caused by sexual activity	no	Yes, takes prophylaxis	Refrains from receiving anal penetration	No, but no sex during menstruation	NA	no
Bleeding due to sexual activity	no	no	no	vaginal blood loss	NA	no
Limitations caused by arthropathy	no arthropathy	pain ankle adapts position	pain elbow adapts position	after TKP resulting in stiff knee		pain elbows, knees adapts position
Safe sex	yes	no	unknown	yes	NA	In the 80s

Conclusion

In this small group of patients with a bleeding disorder we found that:

- getting a relation was not a problem in most cases
- sexual activity did not cause a joint or muscle bleeding
- arthropathy sometimes causes limitations in the positions during sexual activities which may have a negative influence on sexuality
- females with Von Willebrand disease may have impaired sexuality due to long lasting heavy menstruation

So sexuality indeed can be impaired in people with bleeding disorders. Health care workers are not always aware that illness, physical limitations and disability may lead to disruption of sexuality. This causes emotional distress and has a negative effect on quality of life

Recommendations

Good information and education on sexuality and sexual problems should be part of comprehensive care in haemophilia. Alternative positions may help in case of arthropathy.

Literature:
Sexuality and bleeding disorders.
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