

Talk about sex with your patients!

Sex(uality) post gynaecological cancer treatment: South African women describe their experiences

 Pitcher, S., Fakie, N., Adams, T., van Wijk, L., Saidu, R., Denny, L., & Moodley, J.

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BACKGROUND

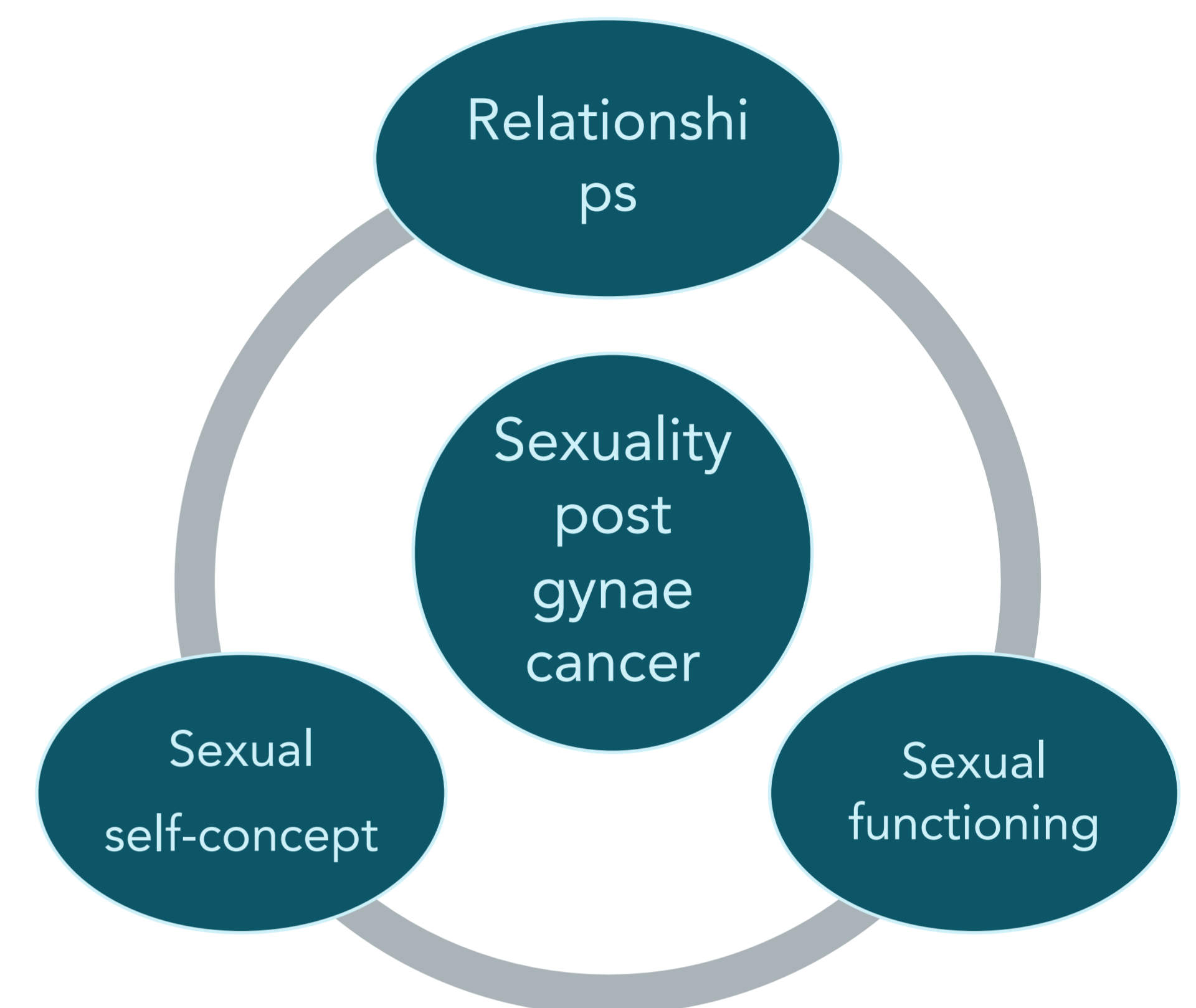
- Sex(uality) is often sidelined during gynae cancer treatment
- QoL is a vital component of gynae cancer survivorship
- 40-100% of patients experience sexual difficulties post treatment

METHODS

1. Qualitative descriptive design
2. Purposive sampling
3. Women recruited from gynae-oncology follow up clinics at GSH
4. 35 semi-structured, face-to-face, in-depth interviews
5. Used pile-sorting in interviews
6. Thematic analysis

RESULTS

- ❖ Confirmed existing literature relating to physical sexual (dys)function post treatment
- ❖ 'Failing' as a woman after treatment
- ❖ The idea that male partners need constant sexual activity
- ❖ Disappearance of the sexual self
- ❖ Experiences of sexual violence & coercion



"There's always anger in the household because you are sick, everything is going backwards...It **seems like there is no mother in the home** because mom is sick. So, everything is unpleasant, and so **you start to doubt whether you are a real woman**" (Grace, vulvar cancer)

"I know how a man is, men are not like us, we can go months even years without it **but men want to do it all the time...but you know how men are, they just want to have sex**" (Kamilieta, cervical cancer)

"But I think your labia or clit is dry, something died....**Something died after the hysterectomy**, you know it's just your clitoris sometimes doesn't want to wake up" (Ivy, ovarian cancer)

SUPPORT NEEDED POST TREATMENT

- i. **More sexual functioning information from healthcare professionals**
- ii. Support groups
- iii. Support from partner
- iv. Individual counselling

For more information see:

Pitcher, S., Adams, T., van Wijk, L. A., Fakie, N., Saidu, R., Denny, L., & Moodley, J. (2018). Holistic sexuality post gynaecological cancer treatment: A review of recent literature. *South African Journal of Oncology*.

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