

ARTICLE SUMMARY:

Stigma & the Sexual Isolation of People w/ Serious Mental Illness

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- Used qualitative data collected from large sample of MI folks as part of HIV prevention research study. The original population was between 18-60 years old, had a “serious” mental illness (ie: something that causes severe difficulty daily), and weren’t currently subject to criminal charges. Among the questions asked was “have you been sexually active during the last 3 months?”.
- Their subsample of 261 MI folks all denied any recent/current sexual activity.
- Those who reported celibacy were asked to give reasons for this and the reasons were analyzed and broken down into 8 interrelated explanations
- Those who were sexually inactive were more likely to be male, never married
- Those with schizophrenia and those w/ low GAF were least likely to be currently sexually active.
- Reasons for celibacy included:
 1. poor access to sexual partners
 2. experiencing sexual dysfunction including impact of drug/alcohol use
 3. difficulties forming relationships
 4. fearing disease and/or pregnancy
 5. moral concerns/quality of relationship concerns
 6. sexually restrictive treatment settings (in group homes as well as inpt)
 7. everyday life w/ mental illness interferes negatively w/ sexuality
 8. feels devalued by other and so withdraws
- Has really good stats in beginning regarding general sex activity levels of mentally ill, in and out of mental hospitals as well as the role impotency plays in pt medication non-compliance.