

## Sexual dysfunction in patients with multiple sclerosis

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Background: Sexuality is an important part of health. Patients with multiple sclerosis (pwMS) may experience sexual difficulties (SD) due to multiple factors. The objective of this study was to detect possible contributing factors. Methods: This was a study conducted in tertiary care center over 10 months. SD and symptoms that interfere with sexual activity or satisfaction over the last six months were evaluated using 15-item Multiple Sclerosis Intimacy and Sexuality Questionnaire (MSISQ). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 23.0(IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA)). Results: Hundred and one consecutive pwMS (75 female, 26 male; mean age 42.09 (range 19-77 years), mean Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS) score 3.1 (range 0.0-7.0)) participated in this study. On MSISQ 26.2% (N=16) female pwMS report inadequate lubrication, 41.7% (N=10) male pwMS difficulty with erection. 28.3% (N=23) pwMS report lack of sexual interest or desire, 19.8% (N=17) less feeling or numbness in their genitals, 32.9% (N=27) report it takes too long to orgasm or climax. In 32.6% (N=32) bladder problems, 16.3% (N=14) pain, burning or discomfort, 20.9% (N=18) tremors or shaking, and in 28.1% (N=25) muscle tightness or spasms in their arms, legs or body interfered with their sexual activity. 20.2% (N=17) report feeling less masculine or feminine due to MS. Conclusion: Multiple factors may contribute to sexual difficulties which must be considered when managing pwMS.