



# Sexual Health After 60

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The staff and faculty involved with the planning of today's event **do not** have any conflicts of interest to disclose.





# Speaker Disclosure

Speaker has no conflicts of interest to disclose



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# Today's Objectives

1. Describe the importance of sexual health as a part of aging.
2. Identify barriers to sexual health in older adults.
3. Discuss ways to address the sexual health needs of older adults into clinical practice.



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# Why is Sex Important?



☰ The New York Times Magazine Account ▾

# The Joys (and Challenges) of Sex After 70

Sex can drop off in our final decades. But for those who keep going, it can be the best of their lives.



<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/12/magazine/sex-old-age.html#:~:text=They%20found%20that%2053%20percent,widowed%2C%20separated%20or%20divorced.>

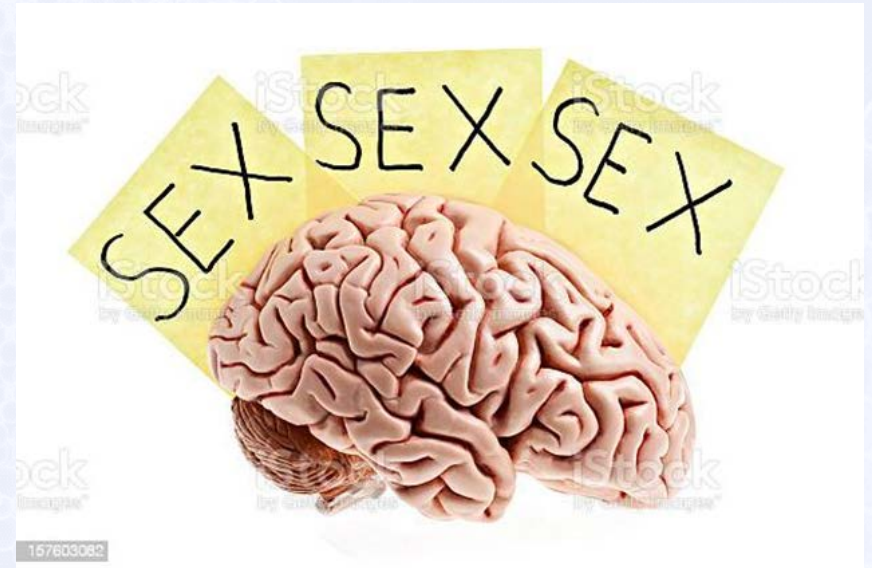


# Sex and Sexual Health

- Pleasure
- Intimacy
- Communication
- Quality of Life
- Improved Mood and Cognition

# Sex and Cognition

- In a study of older adults, **greater sexual satisfaction** was associated with less cognitive changes.
- In another study from the UK with 7,000 participants (50-89 years), **sexually active men and women** had **improved cognitive function** compared to those who did not have regular sex!



Hayley Wright, Rebecca A. Jenks, Sex on the brain! Associations between sexual activity and cognitive function in older age, Age and Ageing, Volume 45, Issue 2, March 2016, Pages 313–317, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ageing/afv197>

# Sexual Health and Transgender Older Adults

- Hormone therapy and surgery can affect sexual function but effects vary by individual
- Gender Affirming Surgery in transmen was associated with more sexuality and sexual activity. For transwomen, gender affirming surgery increased both sexual desire and arousal.

Mattawansoon, et al., 2021



# Sexual Activity, Quality of Life, and Health Outcomes

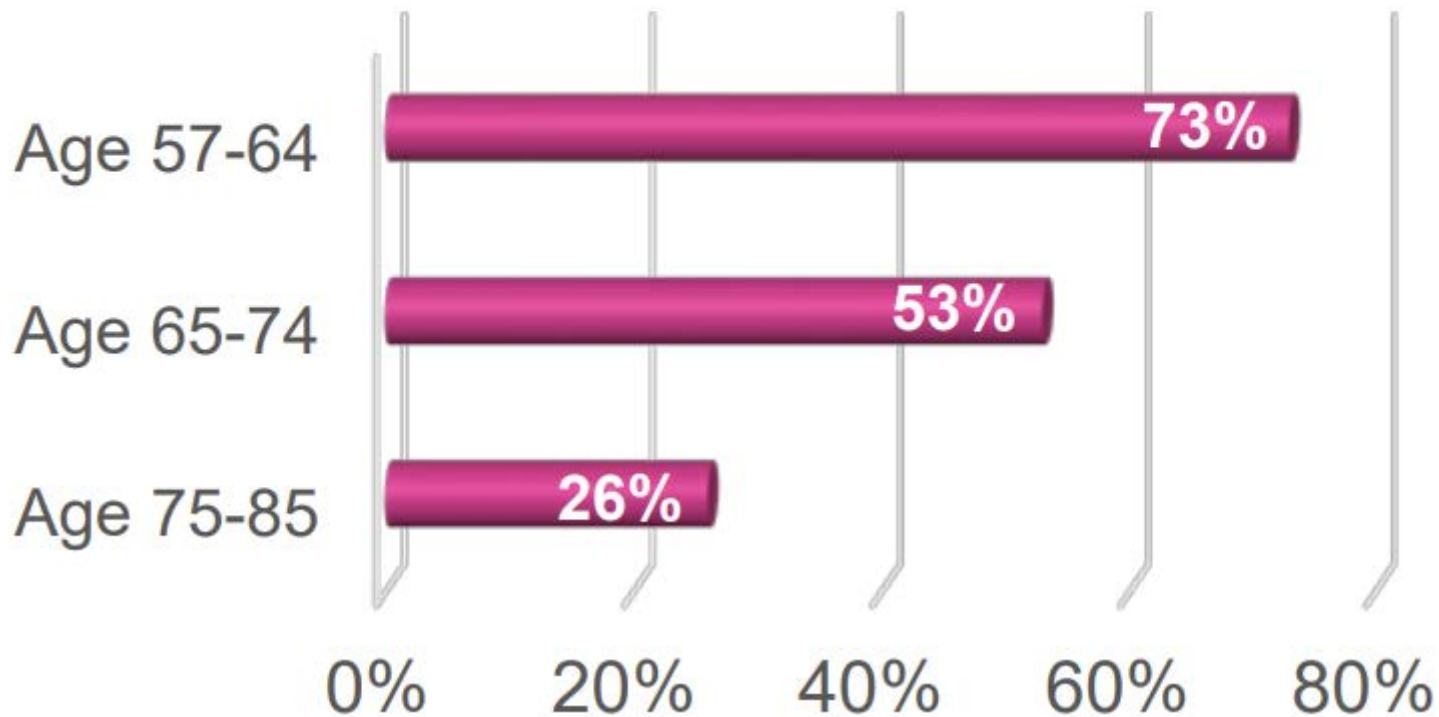
-  Sexual activity and  in sexual problems

Associated with greater risk of :

- Cancer
- Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)
- Stroke
- Long-standing illness
- Poor self-rated health

Jackson, S.E., Yang, L., Koyanagi, A. et al. Declines in Sexual Activity and Function Predict Incident Health Problems in Older Adults: Prospective Findings from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. Arch Sex Behav 49, 929–940 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-1443-4>

# Sexually Active Adults by Age



[https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/publications/docs/sexual\\_health\\_older\\_adults.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/general/publications/docs/sexual_health_older_adults.pdf)



# What Concerns Do Your Patients Have Regarding Sex and Sexual Health?







**17%** of older adults (65-80)  
**talked about sex** with a  
health care provider

**However, 60%** of older  
adults said **they had to**  
**initiate** the conversation

[https://www.healthygagingpoll.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/NPHA-Sexual-Health-Report\\_050118\\_final.pdf](https://www.healthygagingpoll.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/NPHA-Sexual-Health-Report_050118_final.pdf)

# Concerns Of Older Adults Regarding Sex and Sexual Health

- Vaginal Dryness
- Pain
- Erectile Issues
- Body Image
- Incontinence
- Performance Anxiety
- Orgasm
- Heart Attack

# Physiologic Changes, Aging, and Sex

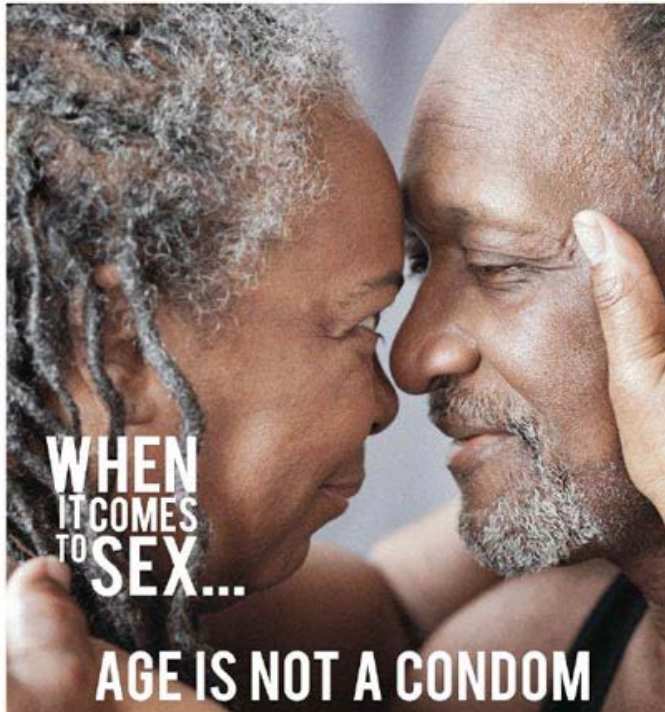
- Atrophy of urogenital tissue in women
- Vaginal dryness
- Decline in sensitivity
- Lowered libido
- Fatigue
- Less frequent and durable erections
- Decreased seminal fluid
- Prolonged refractory period
- Decreases in hormones (testosterone, estrogen)

Argonin, M. (2021). Sexual Dysfunction in Older Adults. UpToDate



# Other Factors





WHEN  
IT COMES  
TO SEX...

**AGE IS NOT A CONDOM**

**Talk to your doctor about your sex life.**

Learn more. Be safe. Get tested.

NYS 800-541-AIDS NYC 800-TALK-HIV  
800-541-2437 800-825-5448

[ageisnotacondom.org](http://ageisnotacondom.org)



ACRIA



CUANDO  
SE TRATA  
DE SEXO...

**LA EDAD NO ES UN CONDÓN**

**Hable con su médico de su vida sexual.**

Infórmese. Protéjase. Hágase la prueba.

NYS 800-541-AIDS NYC 800-TALK-HIV  
800-541-2437 800-825-5448

[Laedadnoesuncondon.org](http://Laedadnoesuncondon.org)



ACRIA





# STIs and Older Adults

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)  
**more than doubled** in past 10 years in  
U.S. among persons 65+

## Primary syphilis

(91 cases in 2007 → 349 in 2017)

## Gonorrhea

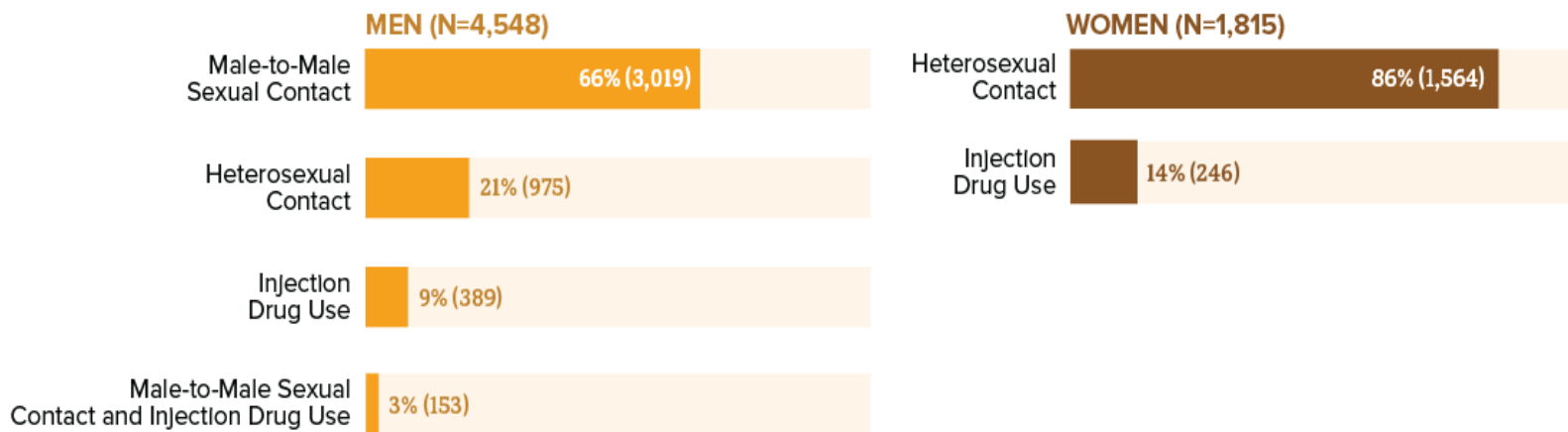
(707 in 2007 → 2063 in 2017)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Atlas Plus: HIV, Hepatitis, STD, TB, Social Determines of Health Data (2021).



# New HIV Diagnoses Among People Aged 50 and Older in the US and Dependent Areas by Transmission Category and Sex, 2018\*

Among people aged 50 and older, most new HIV diagnoses were among men



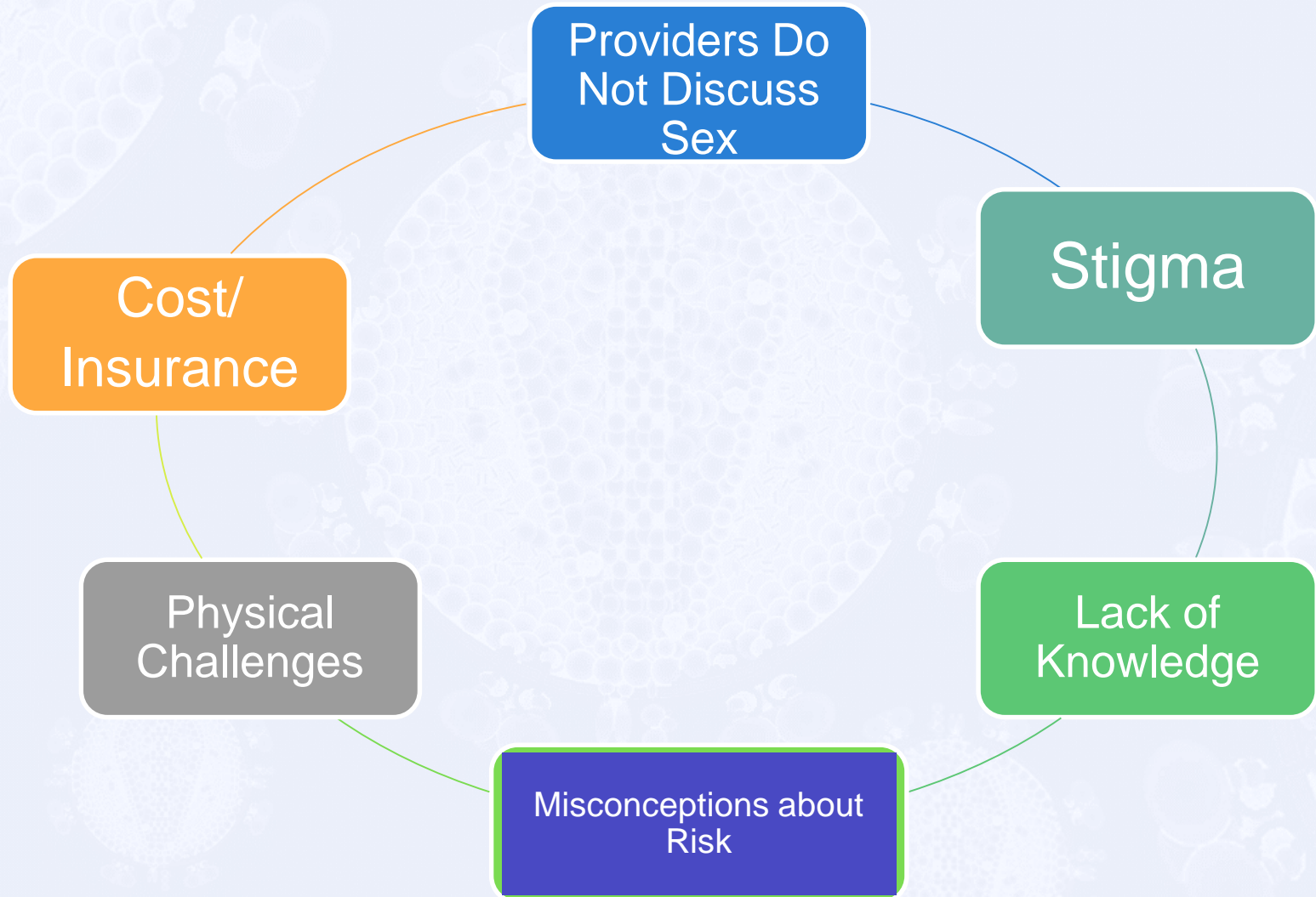
Total for men may not equal 100% due to rounding.

\* Based on sex at birth and includes transgender people.

Source: CDC. Diagnoses of HIV infection in the United States and dependent areas, 2018 (updated). *HIV Surveillance Report* 2020;31.



# Barriers to HIV Prevention in Older Adults





# HIV Testing

## New York State

Routine opt-out testing should be offered to individuals 13 years or older.

\*\* upper age limit removed (2017) – NY State Guidelines

### USPSTF HIV Testing Guideline

Adolescents and adults aged 15 to 65 years	The USPSTF recommends that clinicians screen for HIV infection in adolescents and adults aged 15 to 65 years. Younger adolescents and older adults who are at increased risk of infection should also be screened. See the Clinical Considerations section for more information about assessment of risk, screening intervals, and rescreening in pregnancy.	<b>A</b>
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source: [https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/providers/testing/docs/testing\\_toolkit.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/providers/testing/docs/testing_toolkit.pdf); <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation-topics/uspstf-and-b-recommendations>



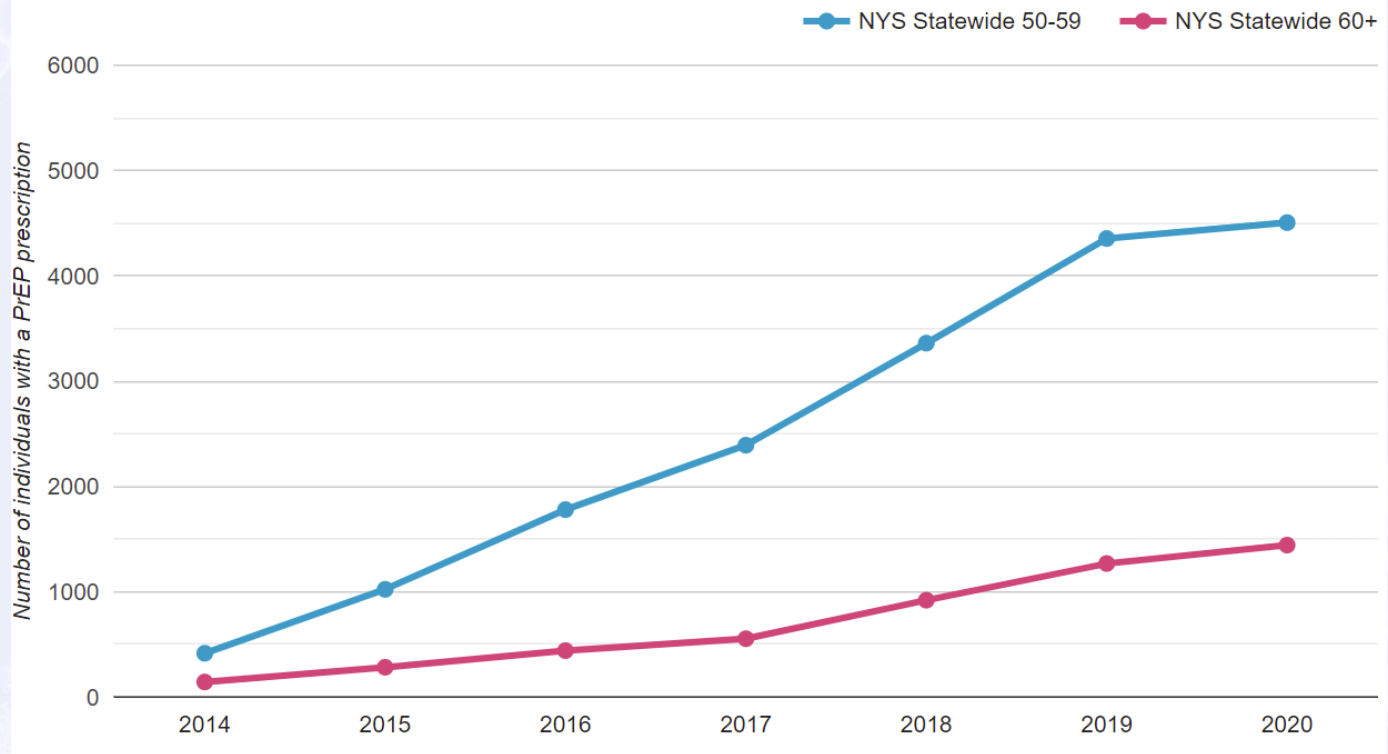
# PrEP Use in the U.S. Among Person 55 years and older

- 21% of PrEP prescriptions in the US were written for persons 55 years or older.
- For every 100 people 55 years and older, 95% knew their HIV status (average was 87 for all age groups)

<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/age/prep-coverage.html>



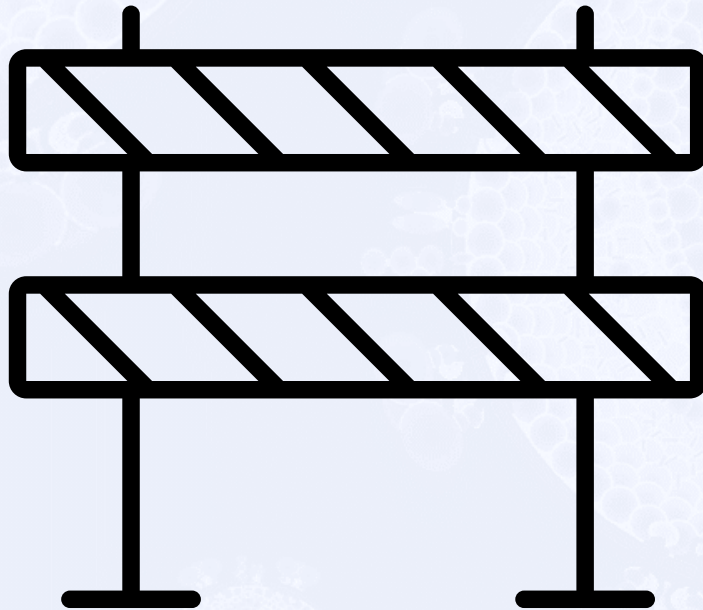
# PrEP Use by Age: 2014 - 2020, NYS Statewide



<https://etedashboardny.org/>



# Barriers To Sexual Health For Older Adults



Individual

Provider

Organizational

Societal

# Barriers to Sexual Health

- Belief that older adults are not sexual
- Providers not adequately prepared to discuss or address sexual health in older adults
- Sexual health often skipped over during medical visits
- Fear, Embarrassment
- Other health priorities



# How do you open the door?





# Normalize Sexual History Questions

- Incorporate sexual health questions into health history
- Use non-judgmental language
- Find an approach that works for you

<https://www.uofazcenteronaging.com/care-sheet/providers/sexual-health-tips-taking-geriatric-sexual-history>



# Approach to Older Adults and Sexual Health Concerns

- Listen
- Build Trust
- Educate about Normal Changes
- Consider Interprofessional Approach



# Management of Sexual Health Needs

- Promote a healthy lifestyle choices
  - e.g., exercise, diet, nutrition
- Compensate for normal age-related changes
  - Lubricants, PD5 inhibitors, Erectile Devices, Different Positions
- Manage chronic conditions
- Review medications for possible side effects



# Key Concepts

- Sexual needs persist throughout the lifespan
- Multiple barriers can impact the sexual health of older adults with HIV (and those at-risk of HIV)
- Addressing stigma and ageism regarding sexuality and sexual pleasure is important part of comprehensive care
- Clinicians should assess and incorporate sexual health as part of routine care



# Questions?

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