

Sexual Satisfaction Levels in Women with Substance Use Disorder

Berfin Gurbet Mutlu, Osman Hasan Tahsin Kılıç, Hakan Gülmez

berfinmutlu98@gmail.com

COAN: 0081IMCIDU2024

ABSTRACT

Background: Substance use disorders are significant public health issues due to their high prevalence, secondary diseases they cause, associated mortality rates, impairments in social and occupational functionality, and their preventable nature. Individual and social factors play a critical role in the development of substance use and dependency. Gender is one of these factors. Studies suggest that the gap between men and women regarding substance use levels is narrowing, and substance use has become a significant issue for women as well. Research indicates that women are more sensitive to the physical effects of cigarettes, alcohol, and other substances compared to men and are affected more severely, even at lower doses—a phenomenon known as the telescopic phenomenon. Substances such as cannabis, opioids, methamphetamine, and cocaine have adverse effects on sexual functions. Chronic use of opioids like morphine and heroin reduces luteinizing hormone secretion, leading to decreases in testosterone and estradiol and increases in free sex hormone-binding globulin, resulting in hypogonadism. This condition is associated with decreased sexual desire, erectile dysfunction, and infertility. Long-term cocaine use also reduces sexual desire and erectile function and delays orgasm/ejaculation. Similarly, prolonged methamphetamine use can lead to difficulties in achieving a full erection, decreased sexual desire, and anorgasmia (5). We aimed to compare the levels of sexual satisfaction in women diagnosed with substance use disorder to those in healthy volunteers, alongside related factors such as sexual knowledge levels, type of substance used, dependency levels, and sociodemographic characteristics.

Materials and Methods: This study included a total of 200 female volunteers aged 18-65. Of these, 100 were women diagnosed with substance use disorder based on psychiatric interviews and urine toxicological analyses at the Controlled Release Clinic of Izmir Democracy University Buca Seyfi Demirsoy Training and Research Hospital. The remaining 100 comprised the control group, consisting of women who visited the Family Medicine department at the same hospital. Participants in both groups were administered the Sexual Knowledge Scale and the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale.

Results: The mean age of participants in the substance use group was 33.05 ± 8.10 years, while the control group had a mean age of 31.46 ± 6.65 years. This difference was not statistically significant ($p=0.131$). Sexual knowledge scores were significantly higher in the substance use group (8.86 ± 4.35) compared to the control group (7.27 ± 2.55 ; $p=0.002$). We found that satisfaction scores were similar between the two groups (substance use group: 57.74 ± 10.08 , control group: 57.49 ± 1.42 ; $p=0.81$).

Discussion and Conclusion: The findings of this study reveal significant differences in sexual knowledge levels between women with substance use disorder and healthy controls, with higher scores observed in the substance use group. This may indicate an increased awareness or exposure to sexual health information within this population, possibly due to their experiences. However, despite these differences in knowledge, overall sexual satisfaction scores were similar between the two groups, suggesting that increased sexual knowledge may not necessarily translate into greater sexual satisfaction. Additionally, the lack of significant differences in total satisfaction scores highlights the complexity of factors influencing sexual satisfaction, which may extend beyond substance use and include