Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology with an emphasis in Clinical Psychology

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M.A. in Psychology, June, 2017, University of Missouri-St. Louis
B.A. in Psychology, May, 2014, Scripps College

Women’s Sexual Satisfaction in the Context of Midlife Relationships:
Examining an Ecological Model and Intergenerational Caregiving

Date: May 8, 2020
Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm
Place: Remote

Abstract
This study examined an ecological model of sexual satisfaction in midlife women in relationships, and paid particular attention to the role of intergenerational caregiving in predicting satisfaction. Participants were 1,411 midlife women in relationships who participated in the Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) national study. Using split samples for replication purposes, data from this survey were examined to test the hypothesis that an ecological model - including the macrosystem level variable of religiosity, the exosystem level variables of SES, social support, and parenthood, the mesosystem level variables of relationship satisfaction, affectual solidarity, relationship length, and sexual functioning, and the microsystem level variables of age, negative affect, and physical health and functioning – would together predict sexual satisfaction. This study also hypothesized that family caregiving status, and specifically being an intergenerational caregiver, would add to the predictive power of the existing model, with caregiving associated with decreased satisfaction. Further, this study hypothesized that the extent of the intergenerational caregiving role would be negatively associated with sexual satisfaction, above and beyond caregiving status. Finally, this study hypothesized that the relationship between extent of intergenerational caregiving and sexual satisfaction would be moderated by perceived partner support, and that this relationship would be mediated by levels of negative affect. Support for an ecological model of sexual satisfaction was found, with income, affectual solidarity, and sexual function significantly contributing to sexual satisfaction across both split samples. However, caregiver status was not associated with sexual satisfaction and did not add any predictive power to the existing ecological model. Taken together, results suggest that an ecological model is a relevant organizing framework for understanding sexual satisfaction in this population of women.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
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