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**LIFE SATISFACTION AND SEXUAL FUNCTION IN DIABETIC WOMEN.
A CASE-CONTROL STUDY**

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The aim of this study was to determine sexual function and experienced life satisfaction in women with insulin dependant diabetes mellitus (IDDM) and in age-matched controls (C).

SUBJECTS AND METHODS: Forty-two women with IDDM (median age 37.5 years, range 27 - 50), and 42 controls were included. Age at onset of diabetes varied between 4 - 41 years (median 16) and its duration was 3 - 38 years (median 20 years).

A structured interview focused the women's medical, sexological and social case-histories. The sexological parameters included in this study were sexual activities and prevalence of functions/dysfunctions. Furthermore, a check-list with one general and 10 domain specific items of life satisfaction were included.

RESULTS: No significant inter-group differences in demographics and early sexological case-histories were found. Eighty-one percent of those with IDDM and 98% of the controls had a stable sexual relationship. The vast majority, 94% and 97%, respectively, were satisfied with their sexual partner. While 98% of the controls were satisfied with their sexual life and 93% were satisfied with their bodily capacity in giving pleasure, this was the case for significantly fewer in the IDDM-group (79%, both items). The controls also found their body to be significantly more attractive (86%) than did those with IDDM (76%). Sexual dysfunctions (inhibited sexual desire, vaginal lubrication and/or orgasmic capacity) were also significantly more prevalent in the IDDM-group (40%) than in the C-group (7%). Moreover, none of the controls had more than one such dysfunction while several of the IDDM-women reported aggregations of them. The controls also expressed that they wanted sexual intercourse more often than the IDDM-women.

On the other hand, levels of life satisfaction were similar in both groups concerning satisfaction with life as a whole and with the domains: sexual life, partnership relations, family life, self-care ADL, occupational and financial situations and also with mental health; but the IDDM-women were less satisfied than the C-group concerning contacts with friends/acquaintances and with their somatic health. In rank order, satisfaction with life as a whole was significantly associated with mental health, partnership relations, family life, leisure, sexual life and occupational situation.

SUMMARY: Sexual dysfunctions were common in these diabetic women who also perceived their body less (sexually) attractive. And, the diabetes appeared to influence their satisfaction with social interactions. They were evidently less satisfied with their somatic health than were the controls. On the other hand, their sexual satisfaction as well as their overall life satisfaction and several domain-satisfactions were not afflicted