STI’s and Elderly Populations

85% of men and 61% women said sex was important to their quality of life.

*AARP 2010

Fiction

• The elderly do not or should not have sex.
• Older adults are less sexually active than their younger counterparts.
• Sexuality is not essential to human well being.
• STI’s always have signs and symptoms.

Facts

• Since 2000, the number of STIs in the US population has steadily increased among persons aged 50 years and older.
• Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and HIV are among the most frequently reported STIs in this age group.
  • Include newly acquired infections and residual complications.
  • Providers may not recognize signs and symptoms of STIs in older adults or may attribute symptoms to a different cause, which can delay diagnosis and treatment.
  • Increases the potential for complications, but also increases the risk of transmission to sexual partners.

More than 80% of adults age 50-90 are sexually active
Health Professional Considerations

• Have an awareness of one’s personal beliefs, behaviors, thoughts, and feelings regarding sexuality.
• Work toward developing a home environment that is supportive of residents’ sexuality rights, that permits sexuality expression and promotes a culture where all people concerned are comfortable with sexual issues.
• Do not assume older or elderly persons are not sexually active or assume they are in a heterosexual monogamous relationship.
• Perform complete health history regarding past and present sexual partners.
• Provide education to patients regarding the importance of STI screenings, the purpose of using protection, and why the elderly are at greater risk.

References:

