

Education for healthy sexuality in older Age (EduSexAge)



Principal Investigators: Dr Martin Power, University of Galway, Ireland

Researchers: Dr Saintuya Dashdondog, University of Galway, Ireland

Co-ordinator and collaborators. Monique Epstein, E-Seniors, Paris, France. Isabella Ramos, Tamar Chapidze-Deschard and Olivier Rappaport, E Seniors, Paris. Prof F. Lang, M Schulz and F Damm, Friedrich Alexander-Universität Erlangen, Nürnberg, Germany; Helena Blazun Vosner, Zeleznik Danica and Anja Antic, Fakulteta za ravstvene in socialne vede Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia; Massimo Bardos, Università della Libertà, Udine, Italy. Irene Esteve and Carla Reguengo, Instalofi Levante Si, Valencia, Spain; Sarah Keegan and Dan Fox, The Rural Hub, Cavan, Ireland

Funder: EU Erasmus+

Aim and Objectives:

To raise awareness and challenge the myth of older people as asexual.

To develop education materials for older people to support them in engaging with the topics of sex, sexuality, and sexual health.

To develop education and training materials for health and social care professionals to support them in engaging with older people on the topics of sex, sexuality, and sexual health.

Design/Methods:

This project included a survey of older people in each of the partner countries, as well as focus groups/interviews with older people to gather their views on the topic. The results of the survey and interviews were combined with reviews of the literature to inform the development of the education and training materials. Older people and health and social care professionals reviewed the materials and the online platform, and these reviews were used to inform revisions of the materials and platform.

Public Patient Involvement:

Older people engaged throughout the project. The survey and focus groups/interviews were critical to the development of the user's report. Subsequent to this older people and health and social care professionals contributed to revisions and improvements to the education and training materials, as well as informing platform changes in terms of design and functionality.

Results:

The topics of sexuality and sexual health are often under-discussed or not discussed at all between older people and health and social care professionals. It is a situation shaped by the commonly held view of older people as asexual, which is a view that persists amongst both health and social care professionals and older people themselves. In health and social care settings this can manifest in concerns among both older people and professionals around causing embarrassment or discomfort. This is especially the case where there are gender, cultural or age differences between the older person and their healthcare provider. Nonetheless, the number one preference amongst older people was to discuss health and sexual issues with their doctor. The deeply embedded nature of the myth of older people as asexual impacted significantly the development of the project, as though recruitment to the survey element of the project was largely unproblematic, recruitment to focus groups proven especially challenging. In many instances, the only workable option was individual interviews.

Dissemination:

In addition to the project website and newsletters, each of the partners contributed to dissemination in their respective nations, with each partner holding multiplier events to disseminate the findings to both older people and health and social care professionals.

<https://edusexage-mooc.eu/>

Knowledge Translation:

The availability of education and training materials in a variety of languages (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Slovenian) can assist older people and health and social care professionals in addressing the taboo of older people as asexual.