Abstract: Examining the Psychological and Emotional Experience of Sexuality for Men after Spinal Cord Injury

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**Background:** Spinal cord injury (SCI) affects motor, sensory and psychological functioning, and affects multiple body systems including those involved in sexual function.¹ Sexuality is a basic human necessity and is a vital component for achieving satisfaction with one’s overall quality of life (QOL).² The literature regarding sexuality for men after SCI has focused primarily on physical components, however, sexuality is multifaceted and the psychosocial aspects may be more important than the physical factors for achieving satisfaction with sexual life in this population.³

**Objective:** Examine the psychological and emotional components of sexuality for men with SCI to reveal the principle concerns, identify existing associated resources for patients, where available, and make recommendations for the development of new tools to address issues that are currently unsupported.

**Methods/Participants:** Study I: In-depth phenomenological interviews with six men living with SCI. Study II: Delphi method involving an expert panel of 20 men with SCI to verify themes identified in Study I interviews. Study III: Review of tools and resources which currently exist and correspond to the issues agreed upon by the expert panel in Study II, and make recommendations for the development of resources to fill gaps where necessary.

**Significance:** With advancements in medical and rehabilitative practices, patients are increasingly more likely to survive their injury, and patient life expectancy is now comparable to the able-bodied population.⁴ Research must now address QOL for patients with spinal cord injury.⁵,⁶ This can be accomplished by addressing areas of top concern, including sexuality. Identifying the psychological and emotional concerns will help guide future rehabilitation initiatives, which will serve to improve overall life satisfaction for men after SCI.