

Intimacy & Sexuality as **Women Age**



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#1 Best Seller
NY Times



Sex After 60



Susan St. La Croix
Author of
Sex after 50



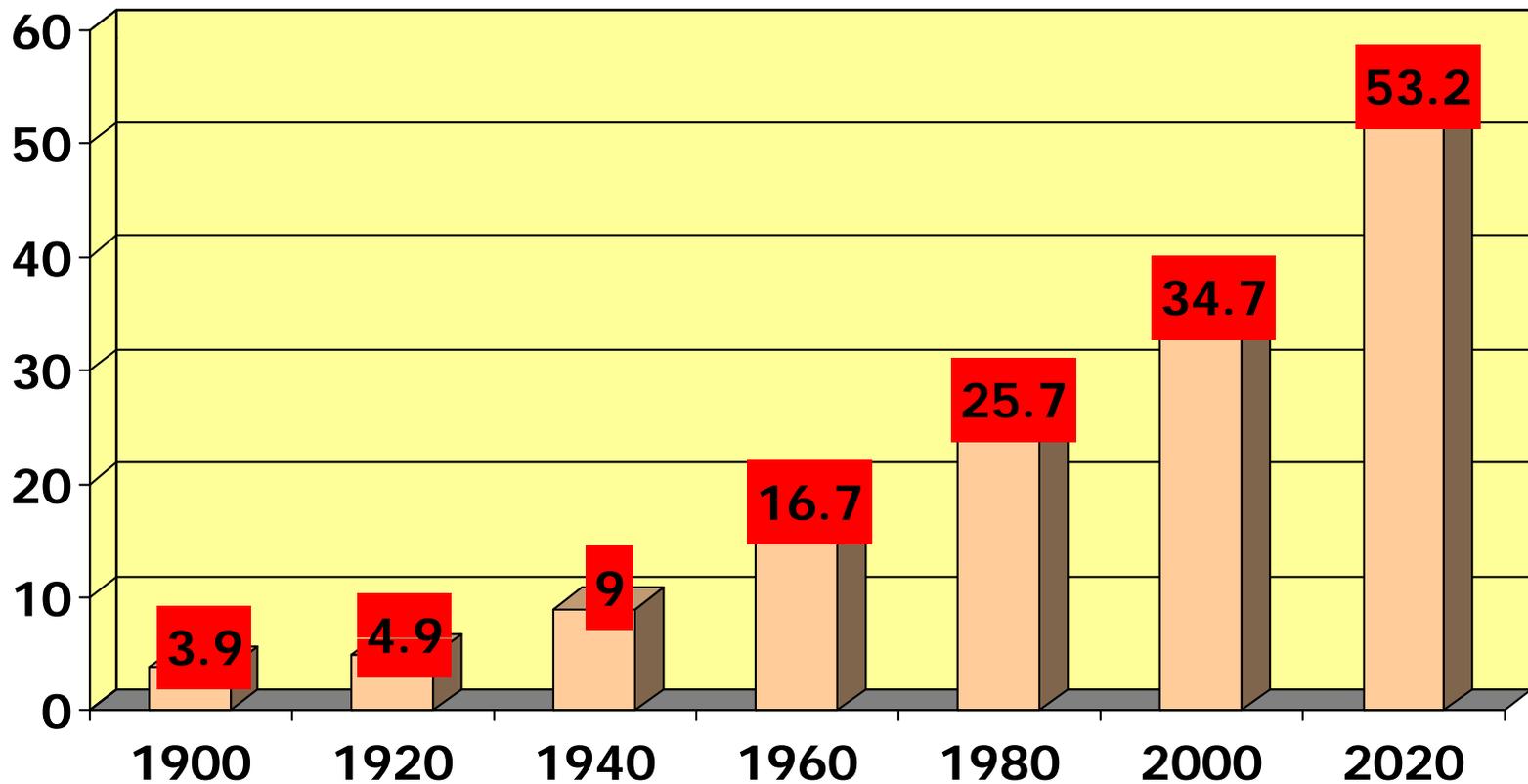
*The Secrets to
Having Good Sex
after 60*



Joy Adams

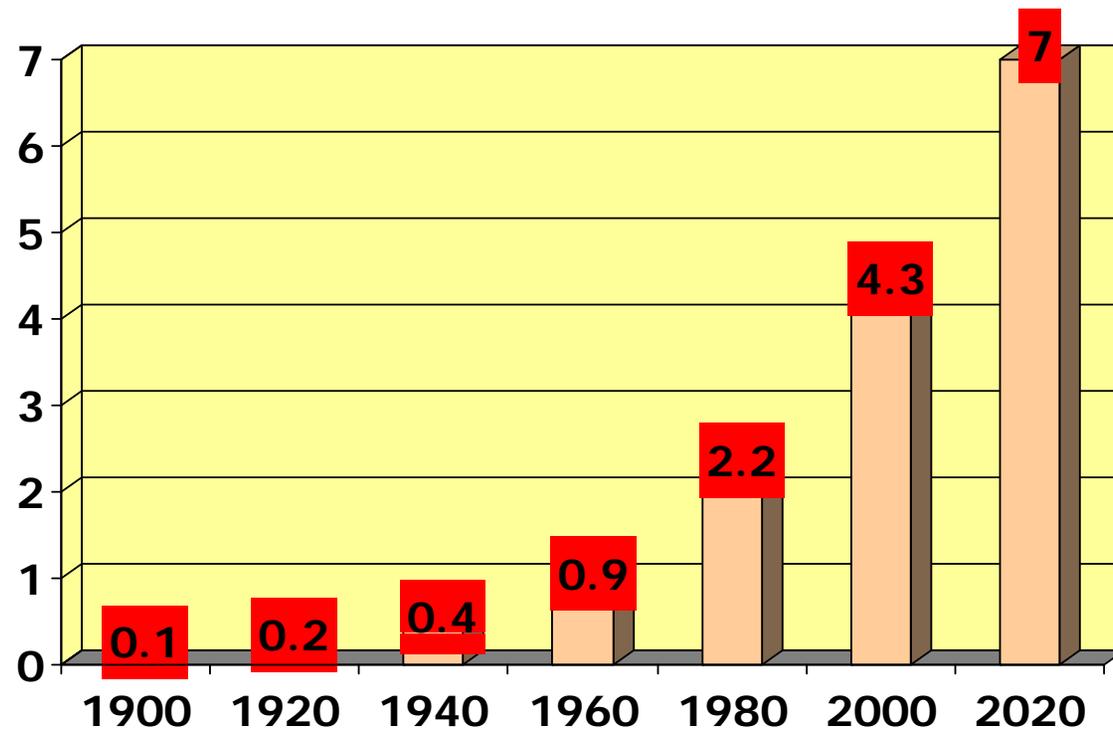
Growth in 65+ Population 1900-2020

millions

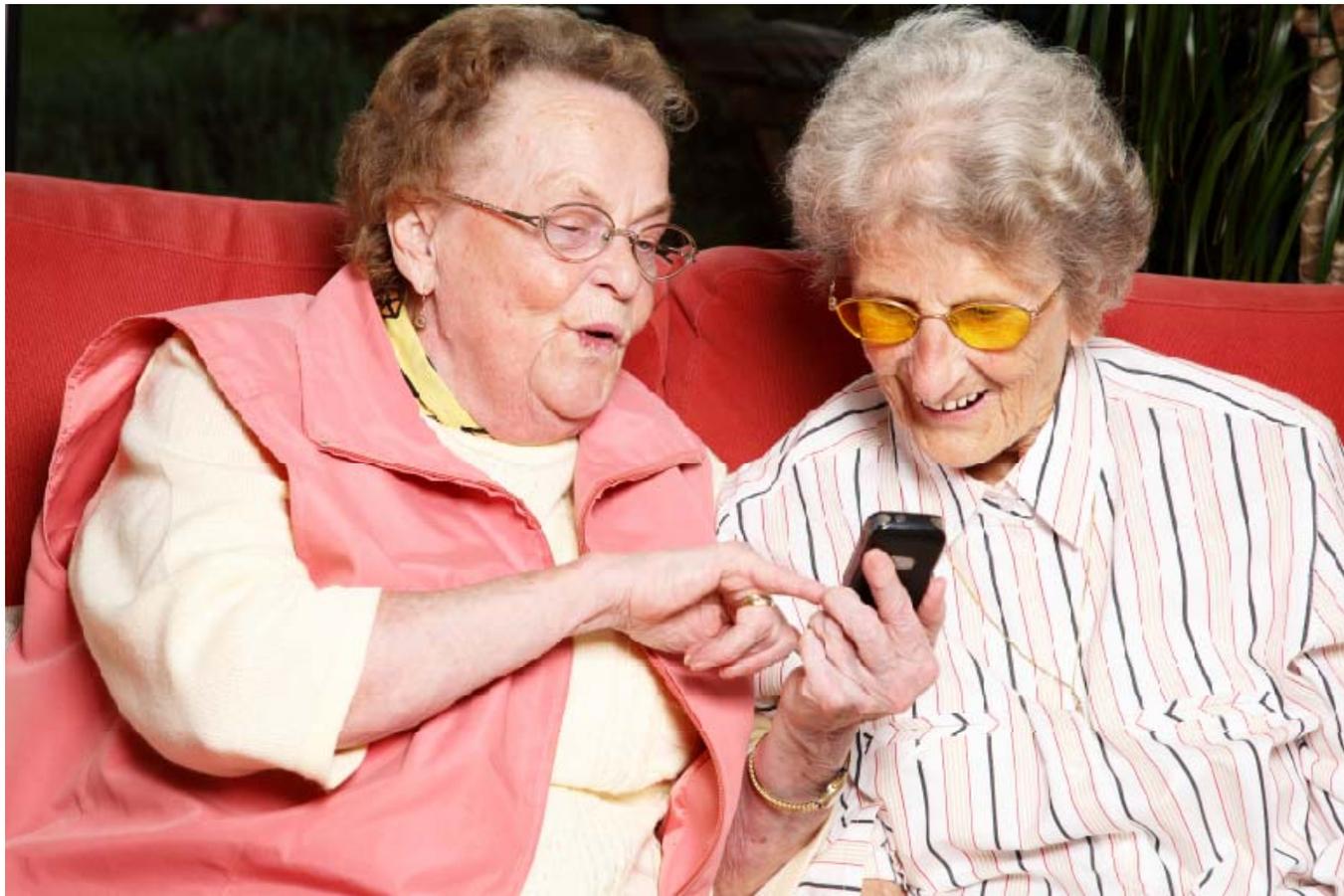


Growth in 85+ U.S. Population 1900-2020

in Millions

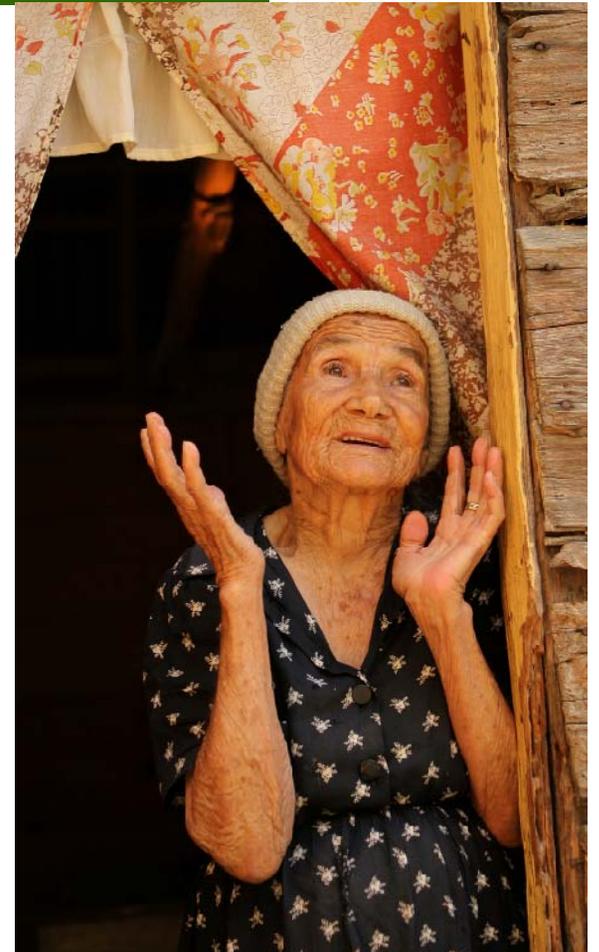


***Of all the people who have ever lived
to be over the age of 65,
Half are alive today***



Objectives

1. Identify common myths about aging and intimacy
2. Describe physical changes associated with aging
3. Define “sex” and “intimacy”
4. Discuss barriers to sexuality and intimacy after age 65



Myth #1: Older adults don't (or shouldn't) want sex.

AARP 2005 Survey

- 90% of U.S. adults over the age of 70 disagreed with the notion “Sex is only for younger people”.
- 60% of people over 70 **with partners** reported sexual touching or caressing at least once a week and 30% reported having intercourse at least once a week.



Global Study of Sexual Attitudes & Behaviors (2004)

27,000 people, age 40-80, in 29 countries

75% of people aged 70-80 agreed:
“Satisfactory sex is essential to maintain a relationship”.



Myth #2 Sex = Intercourse



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- Kissing
- Hugging
- Caressing
- Sexual Touching
- Oral sex
- Masturbation

Myth #2 Sex = Intercourse

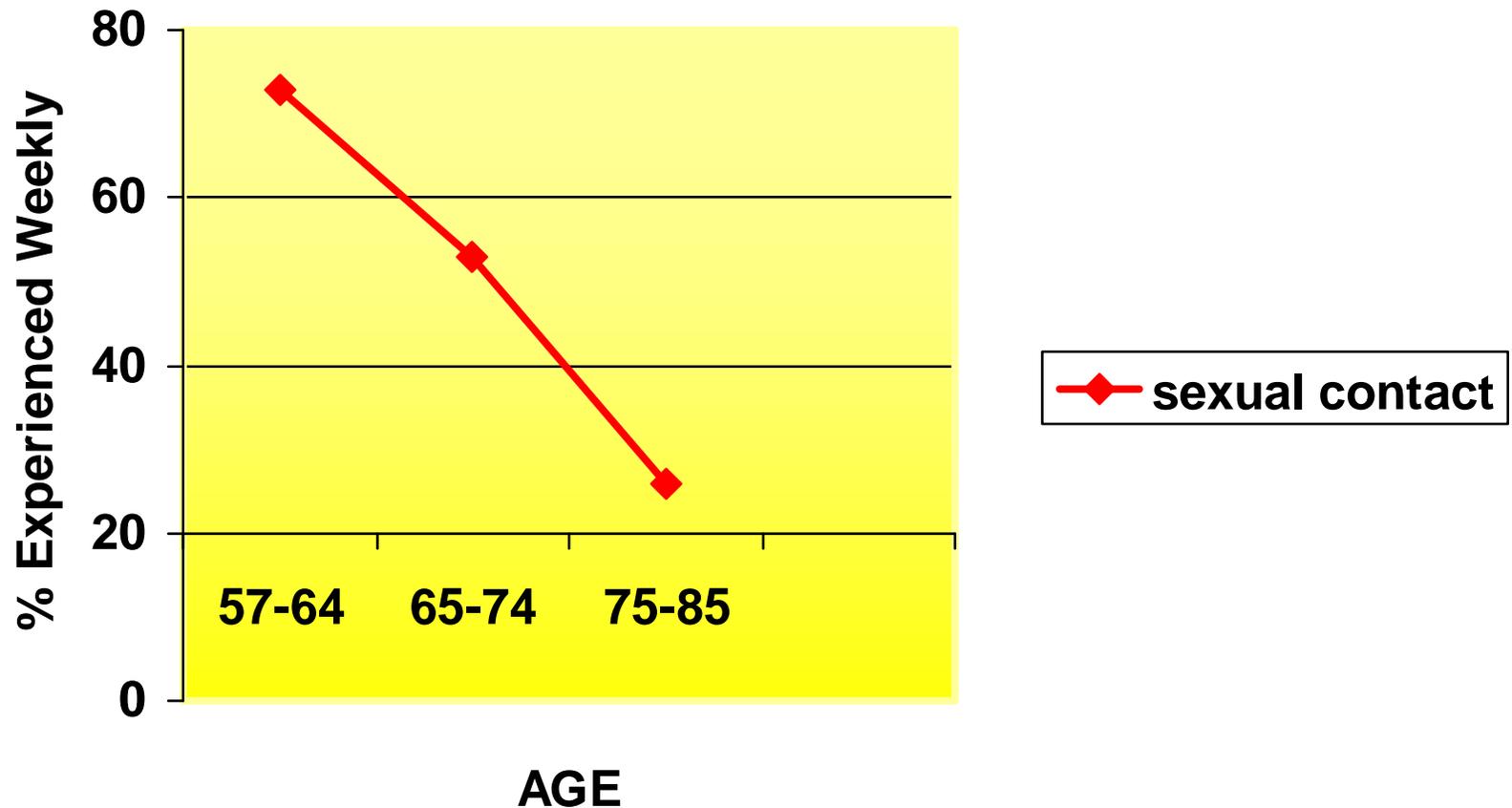
- Holding hands
- Dancing
- Sharing a bench
- Sharing a bed
- Dressing up
- Laughing



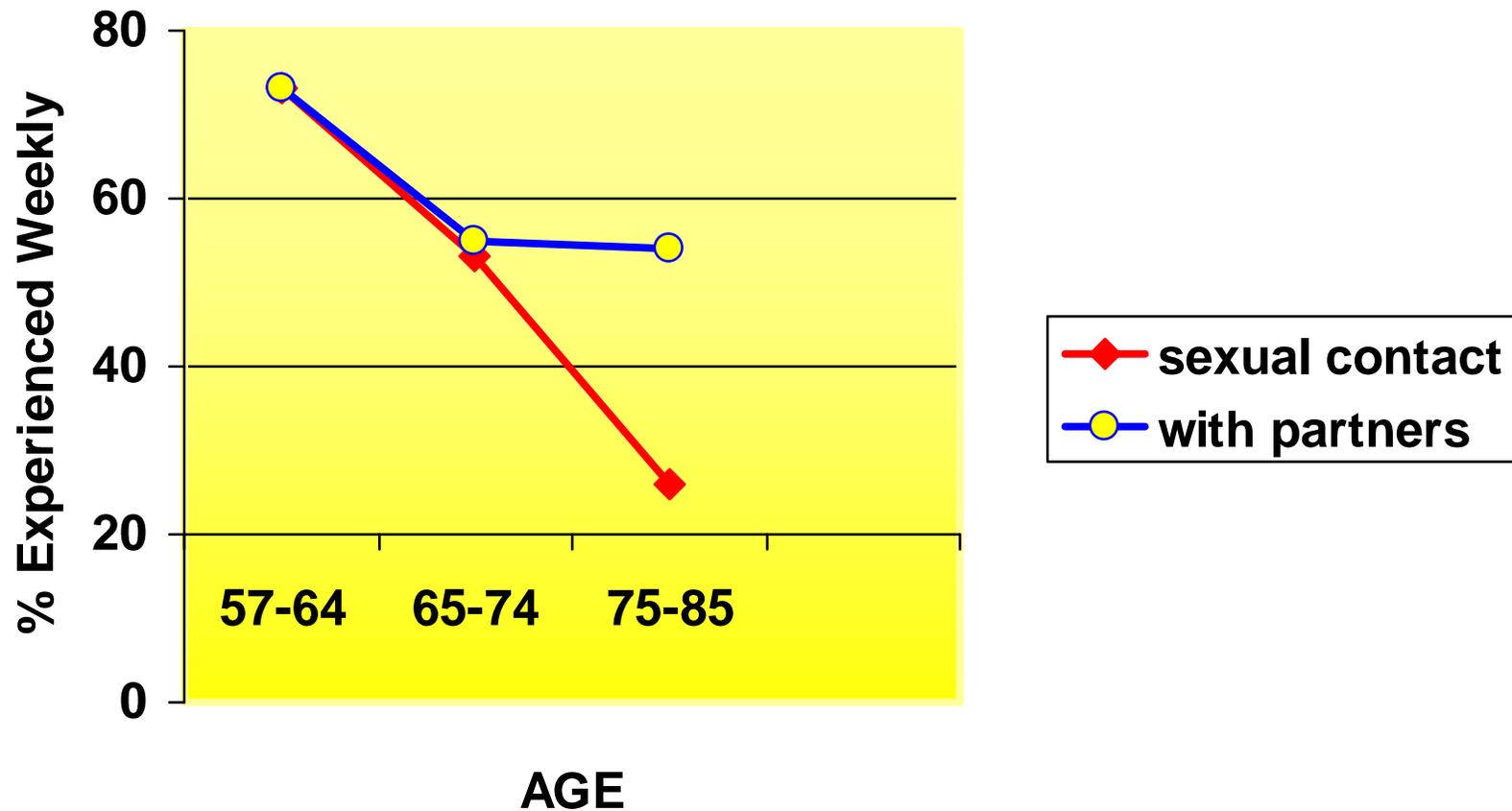
- Kissing
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Frequency of Sexual Contact With or Without Intercourse or Orgasm

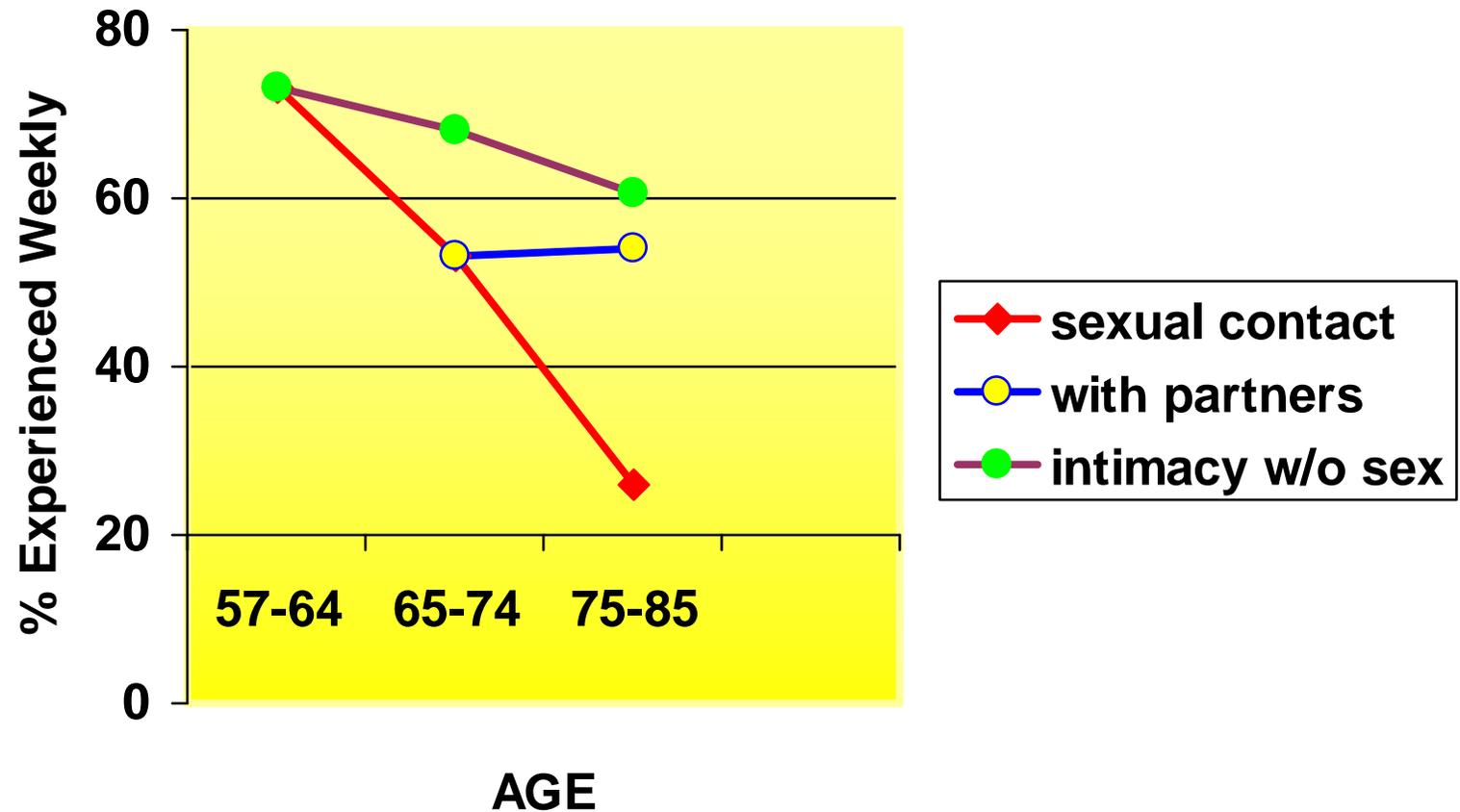
2007 U.S. study with 3005 respondents



Frequency of Sexual Contact for People With Partners



All Forms of Intimacy



Myth #3: Time heals all wounds



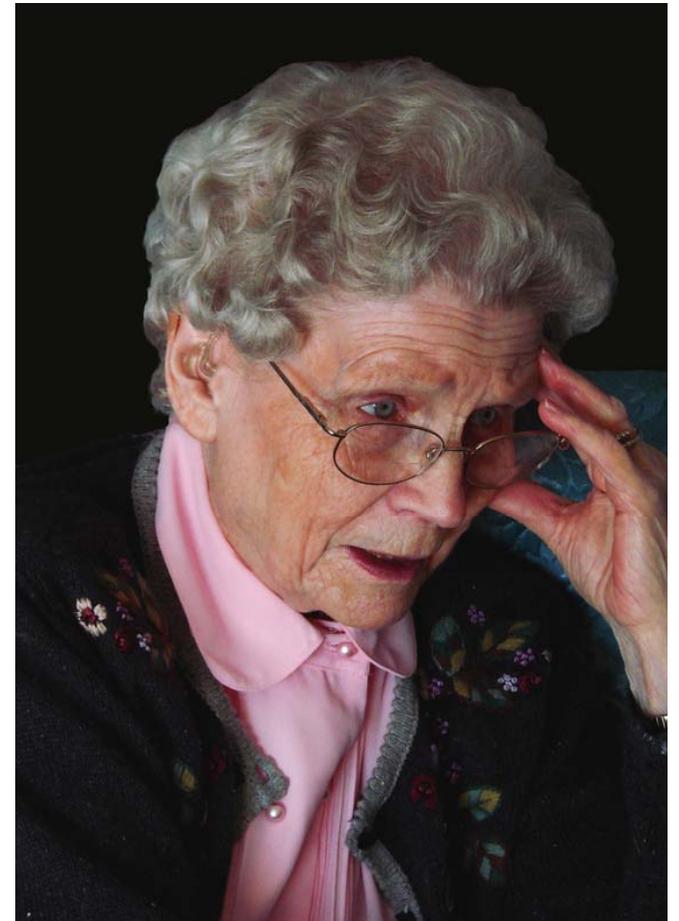
Normal Aging & Body Composition

- Body fat redistributes to the trunk
- Total body water decreases
- Muscle tissue atrophies, esp. with disuse
- Decreased elastin
- Breast Ptosis
- Skin thins
- Age spots & senile keratosis



Normal Aging & Sexual Function

- Slowed sexual response time
- Decreased orgasmic intensity
- Longer refractory periods
- Decreased vaginal lubrication
- Vaginal atrophy
- Decreased hormones
 - Estrogen, progesterone & testosterone, oh my!
 - 10% of women over the age of 70 experience menopausal symptoms.



Disease & Sexual Function

- Urinary Incontinence
 - Decreases lubrication
 - Increases dyspareunia
 - Inhibits libido
- Arthritis
 - Pain
 - Position
 - Function
- Diabetes
 - Neuropathies & circulatory complications
- COPD
 - Exertional dyspnea



Sexual Dysfunction

	Women %	Men %
Decreased Libido	43	26
Erectile Dysfunction		44
Decreased Lubrication	43	
Inability to Climax	35	28
Pain During Sex	15	2
Performance Anxiety	11	29
Sex Not Pleasurable	23	6

“The worst sexual dysfunction in this country is our inability to talk about sex.”



Don't Ask. Don't Tell.

- Providers regularly do not address sexuality in their older patients
- 38% of men and 22% of women reported having discussed sex at least once with a doctor after the age of 50.



Myth # 4: With Age Comes Wisdom

- “The biggest use of prostitutes is the day Social Security checks come out”

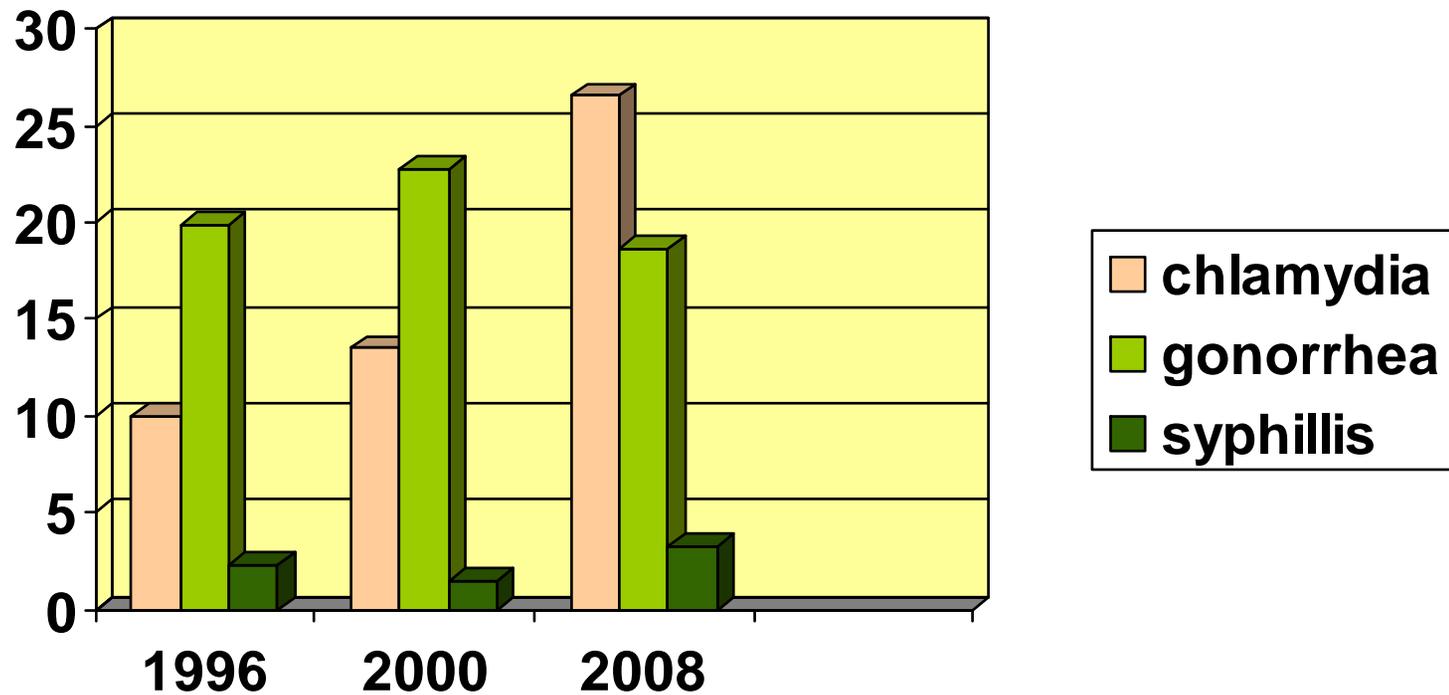
John Morley, M.D. St. Louis Univ.

- **Infidelity after age 60:**
2006: men 28% & women 15%
1991: men 20% % women 5%



Sexually Transmitted Diseases after age 40

CDC Date per 100,000



Do Ask. Do Tell.

Providers need to acknowledge their own discomfort with the topic.

Ask permission before beginning discussion:

- “Can you tell me how you express your sexuality?”
- “What has changed?”
- “What concerns do you have?”



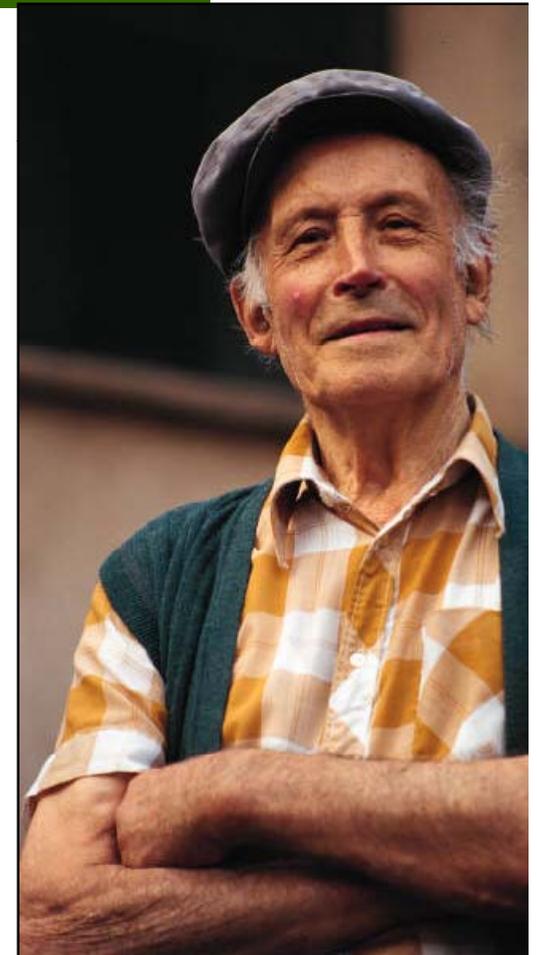
Viagra (Improves blood flow, not libido)

● Consumer Marketing:

- Increased comfort with discussing sexuality
- Increased belief that aging regularly involves sexual dysfunction

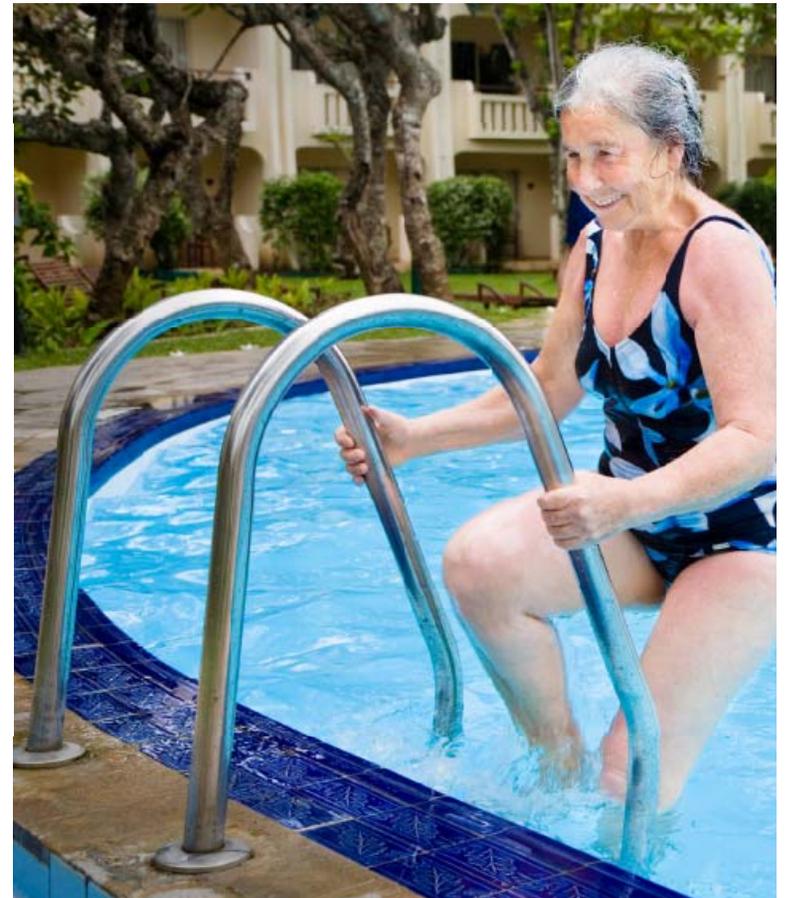
● Women & Viagra

- 2001 European Study (not blinded)
 - improved lubrication & ability to climax
- 2004 Pfizer gave up after 8 years of study
 - disconnect between arousal & desire
 - Viagra didn't affect desire in women



KY (for Vaginal Dryness)

- Vaginal estrogen therapy
 - Cream, ring or tablet
 - No decrease in testosterone levels
- Lubricants (water-based)
- Moisturizers (up to 3 d.)
- Allow time for arousal
- Avoid
 - Vinegar douches
 - Soap & bubble baths



Barriers to Sex & Intimacy: No Partner

- Divorce, widowed, illness
- In the U.S., among those living over the age of 85, there are 4 men for every 10 women.



Barriers to Sex & Intimacy: Living Arrangements

- **With an adult child**
 - Attitudes if not married to partner
 - Lack of privacy
- **LTC facility**
 - Couples frequently don't share a room
 - Sexuality discouraged
 - Lack of privacy



Barriers to Sex & Intimacy: Other

- Stress
- Life changes
- Negative prior experiences
 - 25% report avoiding sex
- Society attitudes
 - Attractiveness
 - Post-widowed relationships
 - **AGE-ISM**



“As one grows older, one grows more like oneself” Gerontologist Bernice Neugarten



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