



Research Project Information Sheet

Ethics approval no. A/16/900

Intimacy and sexual activity after a heart attack: Current scope of practice amongst health professionals and information needs.

Investigators

Ms Kara Lilly (Principle Researcher, University of the Sunshine Coast), Dr Jane Taylor (University of the Sunshine Coast), Ms Rachelle Foreman (National Heart Foundation of Australia), Mr Bill Stavreski (National Heart Foundation of Australia), Dr Claire Moran (True Relationships and Reproductive Health)

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to explore the attitudes, awareness and current practices of health professionals when discussing intimacy and sexual activity with patients who have had a heart attack and/or their partner. Your responses will be used to inform future resourcing and professional development in this area.

Background

This project is an important piece of work, following on from the *Heart Foundation's Heart Attack Survivors Survey: Gender Comparison* report. The survey findings report heart attack survivors' experiences prior, during and after a heart attack. For the first time, heart attack survivors were asked questions regarding their sexual relationships and level of intimacy following their heart attack. Of the survey respondents, 55% indicated that they had not spoken to a health professional about resuming sexual activity after their heart attack and/or been provided with information about this issue.

The National Heart Foundation of Australia would like to support health professionals to be able to have this discussion openly with patients who have had a heart attack. In partnership with the University of the Sunshine Coast and True Relationships and Reproductive Health, the National Heart Foundation of Australia is exploring the current knowledge, attitudes and practices of health care professionals including the enablers and barriers to providing information and counselling about intimacy and sexual activity to cardiac patients.

Participant Experience

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary and participants may discontinue the survey at any time. You have been asked to participate in this survey as a health professional that has interaction with patients after a heart attack. You will be asked to complete an online survey regarding your current practices of talking about, and providing information about sexual activity and

intimacy to patients after a heart attack. The survey will also ask about what further resources would assist you to discuss sexual activity and intimacy with patients. Completion of the survey will be considered your consent to participate in the study.

Duration

The survey will take 10-12 minutes to complete.

Risks and benefits

There are no specific risks involved in completing this questionnaire. The topic of sexual activity and intimacy may be uncomfortable for some participants, although be reassured that the survey is completely anonymous and the research team appreciate your honesty. The results of the survey will be used to inform future resourcing to support health professionals to provide information to patients about sexual activity and intimacy to patients who have had a heart attack.

Confidentiality and results

Your responses to the survey will be completely anonymous. A summary of findings and results from the survey will be circulated by the National Heart Foundation of Australia e-newsletter and via other peak body contacts. Non-identifiable results may be presented at professional conferences, meetings or by publication.

Complaints

If you have any complaints about the way this research is being conducted you can raise them with the Principal Researcher or, if you prefer an independent person, contact the Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Sunshine Coast: (c/- the Research Ethics Officer, Office of Research, University of the Sunshine Coast, Maroochydore DC 4558; telephone (07) 5459 4574 or email humanethics@usc.edu.au).

Contact

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The researchers and organisations involved would like to thank you for your interest in this project and appreciate the effort involved.