


ATTITUDES OF MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS TOWARDS THE SEXUALITY OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY



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Why are attitudes to sexuality important?

- Sexuality is an integral part of adult life
 - Historically, individuals with ID have experienced many barriers to the expression of their sexuality.
 - Attitudes influence the amount and type of information, and opportunities that are made available for sexual expression.
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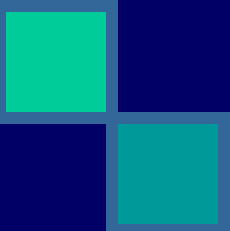



Why are attitudes to sexuality important?

- Attitudes thus have the potential to influence normalised life experiences in the area of sexuality.
 - Attitudes are a reflection of the level of awareness, acceptance and supportiveness for people with ID in relation to this aspect of life.
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Our program of research

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- Development of ASQ-ID – support workers and parents
(Cuskelly & Bryde, 2004)
 - Adaptation of ASQ-ID – community
(Cuskelly & Gilmore, 2007)
 - Support staff & leisure workers
(Gilmore & Chambers, 2010)
- 




Previous Findings from the ASQ-ID

- ASQ-ID is a robust measure of attitudes.
 - Attitudes are generally quite positive.
 - There are few differences in attitudes towards male and female sexuality.
 - Men are seen as having less self-control than women.
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Previous Findings from the ASQ-ID

- Views about parenting tend to be more conservative than about other aspects of sexuality
 - Less sexual freedom is seen as appropriate for females with ID than for females without ID.
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Disability and sexual issues |
Better Health Channel

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au



Where to get help

- Your doctor
 - Family Planning Victoria Tel. 1800 013 952 or (03) 9257 0100
 - Yooralla Community Learning and Living Centre Tel. (03) 9607 3511
 - South East Centre Against Sexual Assault Tel. (03) 9594 2289
 - Office of the Public Advocate Advice Service Tel. 1300 309 337
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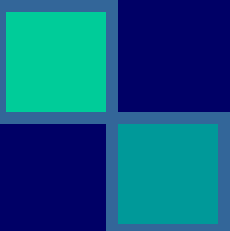

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■ **Your doctor**

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Procedure

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- Mailout to general practices
 - Addressed to practice manager
 - Printed on colourful paper
 - *WE NEED YOUR VIEWS!*
 - Anonymous
 - Return envelopes provided
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Participants



106 General Practitioners:

n = 76 Brisbane area (66% female)

n = 30 Qld regional areas (55% female)




Age distribution by region

Age Range	Brisbane n = 76 Frequency (valid percent)	Qld Regional n = 30 Frequency (valid percent)
20 – 29	5 (6.6%)	2 (6.7%)
30 – 39	22 (28.9%)	4 (13.3%)
40 – 49	22 (28.9%)	9 (30.0%)
50 – 59	21 (27.6%)	11 (36.7%)
60 – 69	6 (7.9%)	2 (6.7%)
Over 70	0	2 (6.7%)



Attitudes to Sexuality Questionnaire Individuals with an Intellectual Disability (ASQ-ID)

- 34 items
 - 2 versions (male and female sexuality)
 - Respond in relation to individuals with a mild to moderate ID
 - 6 point Likert scale
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Attitudes to Sexuality Questionnaire Individuals with an Intellectual Disability (ASQ-ID)



- **SEXUAL RIGHTS**

e.g., Sexual intercourse should be permitted between consenting adults with intellectual disability.

- **PARENTING**

e.g., With the right support, women/men with ID can rear well-adjusted children.





Attitudes to Sexuality Questionnaire Individuals with an Intellectual Disability (ASQ-ID)

■ NON-REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR


e.g., Consenting adult men/women with ID should be allowed to live in a homosexual relationship if they so desire.

■ SELF-CONTROL

e.g., Women/men with ID are more easily stimulated sexually than people without an ID.



Results

- Mean responses on the four scales were reasonably similar to those reported in previous samples.
 - There were no differences in attitudes towards male and female sexuality.
- 




Results

- Views were significantly less positive about parenting than about other aspects of sexuality.

Paired samples *t*-test

Males $t(47) = 2.84, p = .007$

Females $t(53) = 3.30, p = .002$





Results


- Less sexual freedom was seen as acceptable for individuals with ID

ASQ-ID and ASQ-GP
Sexual Openness Scale (7 items)

Paired samples t-test


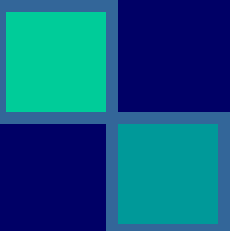
Males $t(51) = 2.49, p = .016$

Females $t(53) = 2.16, p = .036$





Some GPs held very negative views



	Min	Max	Mean (SD)
Sexual Rights	36	76	61.52 (7.01)
Parenting	9	42	31.81 (5.61)
Non-reproductive	10	30	24.98 (3.51)
Self-control	9	18	14.48 (2.16)



Views about sterilization



Question 29:

Sterilization is a desirable practice for men (women) with an intellectual disability.





Views about sterilization



For men with ID:

23% of doctors agree that sterilization is desirable.





Views about sterilization



For men with ID:

23% of doctors agree that sterilization is desirable.



For women with ID:

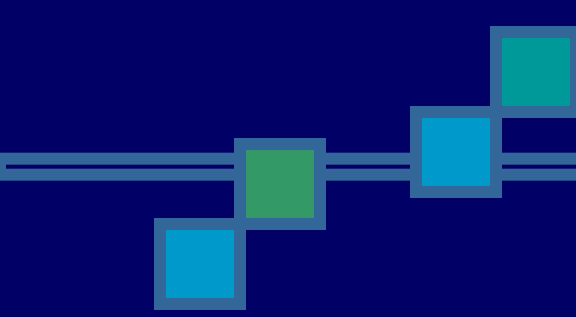
41% of doctors agree that sterilization is desirable.



Percentages agreeing that sterilization is desirable (males & females combined)

Capital city doctors 37%

Regional Qld doctors 20%



Percentages agreeing that sterilization is desirable (total, males, females)



Capital city doctors 37%

Regional Qld doctors 20%

Disability support workers 22%

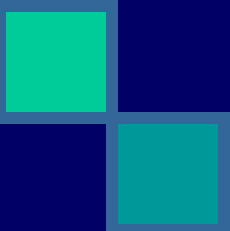
Leisure industry workers 14%

General community 31%





Conclusions



Although overall attitudes are fairly positive, some doctors hold very negative views.

A significant proportion of doctors appear to disagree with current legislation on sterilization.

The reasoning and beliefs that underlie their attitudes are currently unknown.

