ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Impact of Economic Issues on Sexual Satisfaction in Iranian Married Women

Firoozeh Raisi[1], Zahra Shahvari[2*], Mehdi Soleimani[3], Shirin Mohammadi[4]

1. Department of Psychiatry, Roozbeh Hospital, School of Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

2. Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Gachsaran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gachsaran, Iran.

3. Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

4. MS in Psychology. Faculty of psychology and social sciences, Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran.

* Corresponding Author : Zahra Shahvari , Email: shahvarizahra@gmail.com

Abstract

Introduction: Economic issues are one of the social determinants of women's sexual satisfaction. The aim of this study was to estimate questionnaire cut-off point and to compare the effect of economic status on women's sexual satisfaction in years 2014 and 2020.

Methods: Two separate data sets were used in this cross-sectional study. 286 samples were available from 2014 and 150 samples were collected in 2020 in Tehran. Data were analyzed with IBM SPSS software using the one-way analysis of variance, Pearson correlation coefficient, and t-test. For estimating questionnaire cut-off point, the obtained score of questionnaire and clinical interviews evaluation were compared for each participant using Roc curve and Youden Index.

Results: There was no significant difference between women's sexual satisfaction in 2014 and 2020. Sexual satisfaction in 2014 and 2020 had no significant relationship with household economic status. Surprisingly, none of the demographic variables affected women's sexual satisfaction score in the 2020 data.

Conclusions: It seems economic issues have no destructive effect on the sexual satisfaction of Iranian's women.

Keywords: Sexual Gratification, Social Determinants of Health, Socioeconomic Factors, Questionnaire Development

Introduction

Sexual satisfacción is one of the most important components of health and well-being in all people (1). Manny people who apply for divorce are not satisfied with their sex life (2-5). Evidence has shown economic sanctions have had a destructive and detrimental effect on the health of Iranians (6-8) [6-8]. Considering that Iran was under sanctions from1393 to 1399, the misery index (19.3% for 1393 and 46% for 1398) and economic growth index (2.3% for 1393 and -6.8% for 1398) show an increase in economic pressure on the people (9,10).

Considering the cultural context of Iran, the local questionnaire was designed and its psychometrics process was performed (11, 12). The cut-off point is essential for screening questionnaires to identify the boundaries between satisfied and dissatisfied people and planning the necessary interventions.

This study was conducted to determine the cut-off point, sensitivity and specificity of MWSSQ (Married Women's Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire). Considering that the researchers also

had access to a rich database of secondary data (data obtained from the MWSSQ psychometrics process), they decided to compare the sexual satisfaction of women in 2014 and 2020 using the determined cut-off point of the questionnaire and to investigate the effect of variables such as economic status on women's sexual satisfaction in these two years.

Methods
Instrument
MWSSQ was used to measure Sexual Satisfaction in Iranian married women. This questionnaire has 27 items and 4 factors. The four factors of the MWSSQ were "antecedents of sexual satisfaction" (eight items), "physical and mental barriers to sexual satisfaction" (nine items), "dominant cultural values" (five items), and "husband-related factors" (five items). MWSSQ was implemented on 286 married women in the validation phase. Reliability was calculated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient and for the first subscale, it was 0.898, for the second subscale 0.808, for the third subscale 0.770 and for the fourth subscale 0.571 (12). Considering the 5-point Likert scale from Never to Always and a neutral (sometimes) option, the items were measured.

Participants and Procedures
The study was conducted on 436 married women living in Tehran, Iran in 2014 and 2020.

1. The cut-off point of the MWSSQ was initially determined. Using a convenient sampling method and a cross-sectional study, 150 samples were recruited in 2020. These were married women who referred to the psychosexual health clinic of Imam Khomeini Hospital and two other psychosexual health centers in Tehran. These women first filled out the questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participants. The interviewer expressed her opinion on the

interviewee's sexual satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Clinical interviews were performed by a psychiatrist specialist in sexual issues and a master of clinical psychology trained in sexual issues.

2. To assess sexual satisfaction, two data sets were used. 286 samples were secondary data available from 2014. These 286 people filled out the questionnaire in 2014, and there were no interviews with them. The second group was the same 150 people who entered the study in 2020 to determine the cut-off point of the questionnaire.

The inclusion criteria were being married, living with a husband, and having no known disability or mental disorder in two data sets. The exclusion criterion was not filling out the questionnaire completely.

Data Analysis
Data were analyzed through IBM SPSS software version 24 using the one-way analysis of variance and Chi-square for determining the relationship of demographic variables and women's sexual satisfaction. Pearson correlation coefficient, and Independent t-test were applied for determining the difference between women's sexual satisfaction in 2014 and 2020. In order to determine the sensitivity (the ability of MWSSQ to correctly identify people without sexual satisfaction) and specificity (the ability of MWSSQ to correctly identify people with sexual satisfaction) and estimate MWSSQ cut-off point, IBM SPSS software version 24 was used to compare the obtained score of questionnaire and clinical interviews evaluation in each participant using Roc curve and Youden Index (13).

Results
MWSSQ cut-off score
Demographic characteristics and sexual satisfaction of participants in 2014 and 2020 was reported in Table. As it was found, the cut-off score of 61.40 for

the questionnaire was obtained by Likert scoring method, including weighted items. This cut-off score produced a sensitivity of 80% and specificity of 20% for this questionnaire. In this method of scoring, women who obtained a score of 61.40 were considered to be satisfied, and those who had a score of less than 61.40 were considered dissatisfied in their sexual life.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics and sexual satisfaction of participants in 2014 and 2020

Variables		Frequency	P value	Chi-square /ANOVA	
				Value	df
Women Age, y	Year 93	37.71 ± 9.45	.976		
	Year 99	32.97 ± 6.70	.332		
Husbands Age, y	Year 93	42.43 ± 10.62	.932		
	Year 99	36.23 ± 7.91	.564		
Marriage Lengths, y	Year 93	15.12 ± 10.35	.100		
	Year 99	8.10 ± 6.52	.123		
Sexual Satisfaction Score	Year 93	64.45 ± 15.62			
	Year 99	63.49 ± 18.27			
Education (n = 286 , N=158)					
None or Primary	Year 93	17 (5.9)	.013	F=4.447	2
	Year 99	2 (1.3)	.325	100.709	95
High school and diploma	Year 93	68 (23.8)			
	Year 99	13 (8.4)			
Graduate	Year 93	201 (70.3)			
	Year 99	140 (90.3)			
Occupational status (n = 286 , n=158)					
House wife	Year 93	173 (60.5)	.072	F=2.653	2
	Year 99	76 (49)			
Self employed	Year 93	23 (8)	.539	F=621	2
	Year 99	15 (9.7)			
Employed	Year 93	90 (31.5)			
	Year 99	64 (41.3)			
Economic status (n = 286 , n=158)					
Adequate	Year 93	224 (78.3)	.587	432.880	440
	Year 99	109 (70.3)	.747	103.635	114
Not adequate	Year 93	62 (21.7)			
	Year 99	45 (29)			
Number of children (n = 286 , n=158)					
0	Year 93	61 (21.3)	.001	597.3	3
	Year 99	78 (50.3)	.231	1.456	3
1	Year 93	106 (37.1)			
	Year 99	48 (31)			
2 - 3	Year 93	99 (34.6)			
	Year 99	21 (23.5)			
> 3	Year 93	20 (7)			
	Year 99	8 (5.2)			

Sexual satisfaction comparison in 2014 and 2020

In the secondary data, the scores obtained through cut-off (for weighted scores) were calculated for satisfied and dissatisfied women 65.7% and 35.3%, respectively (Mean = 64.45, SD = 15.62) and in the recent data, 61.9% and 38.1%, respectively (Mean = 63.50, SD = 18.28). Independent t-test showed that there was no significant difference between women's sexual satisfaction in 2014 and 2020 (Table 2). The results of Chi-square and ANOVA test showed that among the demographic variables, only education

and number of children had a significant relationship with women's sexual satisfaction in 2014 (Sig≤ .05). Women with no children and lower education were associated with higher sexual satisfaction. However, even these variables did not have a significant relationship with women's sexual satisfaction in 2020.

Table 2: T-test results to compare the level of sexual satisfaction of Iranian married women in 2014 and 2020

	ID	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Statistical groups					
Sexual Satisfaction	1	286	64.4477	15.62103	.92369
	2	155	63.4915	18.27706	1.46805

Leven test to compare equality of variances		Standardized weighted scores of sexual satisfaction	T test results						
			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference Mean	Std. Error Difference	%95confidence interval	
								Lower	Upper
F	Sig.	Assuming inequality of variances	.551	276.641	.582**	.95622	1.73447	-2.45821	4.37065
6.866	.009								

Conclusions

In the secondary data, satisfaction and dissatisfaction in participants were calculated 61.9 and 38.1, respectively. Although these scores are different, the independent t-test showed that this difference is not statistically significant. Even though in the data of 2020 individuals in terms of demographic variables such as age (younger), education (higher) and number of children (fewer) were different from the data of 2014, and 29% of the participants reported insufficient family income (versus 21% in 2014). Despite the differences in these scores, the independent t-test showed that the difference is not statistically significant. These cases may be one of the reasons why these people are less satisfied than the participants in 2014. It means, younger couples and educated people seem to have less sexual satisfaction. This may be due to differences in their sexual expectations with other people (14). One analysis revealed that the level of sexual satisfaction decreased with age, and sociodemographic factors (e.g. education, place of residence) were more important for sexual satisfaction among middle-aged adults (45–64 years old) and less important for older individuals aged 65 years old (15).

The current study emphasizes that sexual satisfaction in 2014 and 2020 had shown no significant association with income. Rahmani et al. (2009) reported 63.4% sexual satisfaction in men and women in Tehran. In their study, only 0.7% of people were completely dissatisfied (16). Gheshlaghi et al. (2014) reported 66.2% sexual satisfaction in women in Isfahan between 2011 and 2012, and 30.8% sexual dissatisfaction (4). Ziaei et al. (2014) reported that the rate of sexual satisfaction of women in Golestan in 2014 was 63.6% versus 0.7% sexual dissatisfaction among these women (17). Also in a study from 2006 to 2007 on 400 couples seeking divorce referring to judicial complexes 1 and 2 in Tehran, sexual satisfaction was asked with a specific question "Are you satisfied with your sex life?" It was shown that 66.7% of men and 68.4% of women were dissatisfied with their sex life (3). The calculated values of sexual satisfaction in this study using the MWSSQ questionnaire are in line with the results reported by the above researchers.

As it is shown in Table 1, in 2014, among the demographic variables, only two variables, i.e., number of children and education, had a significant relationship with sexual satisfaction. Women with

no children and lower education were associated with higher sexual satisfaction. However, in 2020, sexual satisfaction did not show a significant relationship with any of the demographic variables. Afzali et al. (2020) in their study mentioned the following factors as the main social determinants of women's sexual satisfaction: gender dissatisfaction, spouse's job as a worker, low family income and insufficient income of the spouse and dissatisfaction with being a woman (18). The variable "dissatisfaction with being a woman" was not measured in our study, and none of the other cases had a significant relationship with women's sexual satisfaction in recent data. It is considered that determinants of women's sexual satisfaction have changed over time. Of course, this issue needs more research.

The lack of difference in female sexual satisfaction in a 5-year trend in 2014 and 2020 showed that economic factors have no effect on sexual satisfaction in married women or it is probable that during sex, Iranian women can keep their minds exclusively focused on sex. The fact that the sample in this study included the people who referred to sex clinics can be considered as the limits for generalizability of this research. Therefore, it is suggested that the sexual satisfaction of married women and its determinants can be measured using the MWSSQ on a sample that more represents the community.

Acknowledgement

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared that there is no conflict of interest.

References

1. Stephenson KR, Meston CM. The association between sexual costs and sexual satisfaction in women: An exploration of the Interpersonal Exchange Model of Sexual Satisfaction. Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality. 2011;20.

2. Metz ME, McCarthy BW. Male sexuality and couple sexual health: A case illustration. Journal of Family Psychotherapy. 2010;21(3):197-212.

3. Forutan SK, M. JM. Prevalence of sexual disorders in divorce applicants referring to the Family Judicial Comple[Article in persian]. Medical scholar. 1387;16(78):39-44.

4. Gheshlaghi F, Dorvashi G, Aran F, Shafiei F, Najafabadi GM. The study of sexual satisfaction in Iranian women applying for divorce. International journal of fertility & sterility. 2014;8(3):281.

5. Nasimi M, Mahdavi S. The sociological study of women's marital relationship satisfaction [Article in Persian]. Journal of social sciences. 2008;3(2):5-26.

6. Tahan M. The implications of Iran sanctions on civilian mental health and quality of life. Available at SSRN 3427452. 2019.

7. Kokabisaghi F. Assessment of the effects of economic sanctions on Iranians' right to health by using human rights impact assessment tool: a systematic review. International journal of health policy and management. 2018;7(5):374.

8. Tahan M. The implications of Iran sanctions on civilian mental health and quality of life. Available at SSRN 3427452. 2019.

9. Misery index fluctuations in the 90s. [Internet]. Available at:
https://www.farsnews.ir/news/14000230000502 . Published 1400/2/31

10. A study of macroeconomic indicators of Iran in the 90s. [Internet]. Available at: https://www.eghtesadnews.com/fa/tiny/news-406045 .Published 1400/2/3

11. Yekta ZP, Raisi F, Ebadi A, Shahvari Z. Sexual satisfaction concept analysis in Iranian married women: A hybrid model study. Global journal of health science. 2015;7(6):345.

12. Shahvari Z, Raisi F, Yekta ZP, Ebadi A, Kazemnejad A. Married women's sexual satisfaction questionnaire; A developmental and psychometric evaluation. Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal. 2015;17(4).

13. Lai C-Y, Tian L, Schisterman EF. Exact confidence interval estimation for the Youden index and its corresponding optimal cut-point. Computational statistics & data analysis. 2012;56(5):1103-14.

14. Slosarz WJ. Expectations of marriage--relations and determinants. Sexual and relationship therapy. 2002;17(4):381-7.

15. Buczak-Stec E, König H-H, Hajek A. Sexual satisfaction of middle-aged and older adults: longitudinal findings from a nationally representative sample. Age and Ageing. 2021;50(2):559-64.

16. Rahmani A, Khoei EM, Gholi LA. Sexual satisfaction and its relation to marital happiness in Iranians. Iranian Journal of Public Health. 2009:77-82.

17. Ziaee T, Jannati Y, Mobasheri E, Taghavi T, Abdollahi H, Modanloo M, et al. The relationship between marital and sexual satisfaction among married women employees at Golestan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. Iranian journal of psychiatry and behavioral sciences. 2014;8(2):44.

18. Afzali M, Khani S, Hamzehgardeshi Z, Mohammadpour R-A, Elyasi F. Investigation of the social determinants of sexual satisfaction in Iranian women. Sexual medicine. 2020;8(2):290-6