

## Marital Happiness and Sexual Behaviors of Older Adults

Brynn Thompson

Faculty: Twyla Hill

*Department of Sociology, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

The quality of a marriage or partnership can have a substantial impact on many areas of life. A good working relationship can be a significant resource for coping with difficult life situations and stress and may contribute to partners' emotional and psychological well-being and healthy lifestyle. However, marital quality among older adults is often overlooked in favor of studying younger couples. This study examines the relationship between marital happiness and sexual satisfaction, as well as other contributing factors, in the lives of older American adults. Data from a restricted sample (N=1278) from the second wave of the National Social Life, Health and Aging Project was analyzed. Regression models were used to examine associations with marital happiness. Within OLS regression gender, education level, mental health, self-rated happiness, absence of sexual quality, physical satisfaction, and emotional satisfaction were each statistically significant. Females reported higher marital satisfaction than males. Higher educated individuals expressed less satisfaction within their marriages than those with less formal education. Those that rated their mental health, happiness, and physical and emotional satisfaction high also reported higher marital satisfaction. Participants that reported an absence of sexual quality generally rated their marital satisfaction lower. Since the specific sex-related aspects of absence of sexual quality and physical satisfaction were significantly associated with marital satisfaction, further examination may influence the quality of sex within the older adult population.