

Many FPs may face barriers in managing their patients' sexual problems in their practice. Some studies have shown that healthcare providers underestimate the prevalence of sexual dysfunction in their patient population or the impact sexual issues have on patients' quality of life. Too often lack of time can be a barrier as some FPs feel that sexuality is too complex of an issue to tackle in the limited time allotted during consultation. One effective framework is based on the PLISSIT (Permission, Limited information, Specific Suggestions, and Intensive Therapy) model to approach sexual problems. This framework utilizes a stepwise approach which helps the busy FP to streamline addressing sexual problems in a time efficient manner.

If we do come across a patient with a sexual issue that is too complex; exceeds our comfort level or expertise we should not hesitate to refer to our specialist colleagues be it a gynecologist or urologist for co-management. Certain conditions like primary vaginismus for example require physiotherapy and sometimes a psychologist as part of the treatment in a multidisciplinary approach.

Majority of the patients we see in primary care have sexual problems that can be addressed simply by giving patients the correct, evidence based information and helping them to deal with their concerns and anxieties. Our patients can be provided with brief and practical interventions and reassurance about the normal physiology of the human sexual response. In order to do this we need to have some basic understanding of the sexual response cycles of men and women as well as the sexual functions and practices in contemporary society today. As FPs we may not have the same values or attitudes as our patients. However simply by being mindful of sexuality and its problems we can help our patients attain sexual well-being and relationship satisfaction.



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■ CM

An ode to change

by Dr Teo Yee Sheng Victor, Editorial Team Member

It is said that the only constant in life is change.
Change can be scary. Change can be exhilarating.

And yet picked up the gauntlet have we.
Obeyers of the second law of thermodynamics we are not.

The path of our illustrious Seniors is fraught.
And yet we are not dismayed. We are buoyed by
the encouragement & light shone on the path ahead
by our Seniors, who have given of themselves freely.

When we are struck down low, the love of our
Family, friends, peers & Seniors will lift us up.
Remember, the darkest hour is nigh before dawn.
Hence - gird our loins, we will take this one, hand-in-hand.

Change is what we make of it.

■ CM



Editor's note:

Dr Victor Teo has decided to embark on a great change - to take on the MMed(FM) with gusto!