

Department of Psychology Distinguished Speaker Series



DR. SOPHIE BERGERON, UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL

TALK: Genito-pelvic pain: It can hurt more than your sex life

ABSTRACT

Genito-pelvic pain problems affecting women's sexual and reproductive health are poorly understood and often misdiagnosed or ignored. In addition to their high prevalence rates, ranging from 12 to 21% in community samples, these conditions can impinge on women and their partners' sexual functioning, psychological wellbeing and overall quality of life. Findings from observational, daily diary and longitudinal studies concerning the role of psychosocial factors – in particular the relationship context – in the experience of genito-pelvic pain and associated sexual dysfunction will be presented. An overview of psychological treatments will be provided, focusing on results from our two randomized clinical trials (RCT) of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) delivered in group format, and our ongoing RCT testing a novel couple therapy intervention. Evidence supporting the efficacy of each of these modalities will be presented, and methodological issues involved in conducting treatment studies will be discussed. Finally, theoretical and clinical implications of these findings for broader aspects of sexual health and wellbeing will be highlighted.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Bergeron is a full professor in the Department of Psychology at the Université de Montréal. She is also a member of the Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire sur les problèmes conjugaux et les agressions sexuelles (CRIPCAS). Dr. Bergeron obtained her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at McGill University and completed post-doctorate studies in Sexology at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). Her research interests encompass an interdisciplinary perspective on the psychosocial and interpersonal aspects of women's sexual health, in particular the diagnosis, etiology and treatment of gynecological pain, and the treatment of dyspareunia and vaginismus. Funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Dr. Bergeron's current research projects focus on evaluating the efficacy of cognitive, behavioural and medical interventions in treating dyspareunia, as well as the role of affective, cognitive and relational variables associated with gynecological pain. She spear-headed the development of an empirically-tested Cognitive-Behavioural Pain and Sex Therapy for the treatment of women suffering from dyspareunia, and is co-leading the current development and testing of an innovation Cognitive-Behavioral Couple Therapy for women with dyspareunia and their partners. Her areas of expertise, as well as research and clinical interests include the study and treatment of gynecological pain, human sexuality, sexual therapy, couples therapy, cognitive-behavioural therapy and clinical supervision.

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