Sexual aversion disorders in women

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Physical intimacy in a relationship is a dynamic process in which sexual motivation is the willingness to behave sexually with a partner. This intimacy can be perceived as too frightening and can increase anxiety for some women to an overwhelming point of sexual avoidance.

Sexual aversion may have a prominent involuntary neurovegetative basis, which is accompanied by symptoms and signs of anxiety-evoked sympathetic arousal. Or it may have a prevalent cognitive, voluntary motivation, when the woman perceives her exposure to sexual intimacy as frustrating and/or increasing her sense of sexual inadequacy. Both components may be present in the individual woman

Defined as “severe anxiety or disgust at the thought of sexual activity”, sexual aversion disorder has many, often interrelated, causes. Incest, molestation, rape and psychological abuse are often factors resulting in a woman developing complete avoidance of physical intimacy and revulsion at the thought of sexual touch. This anxiety can be severe enough to result in phobic and fear responses associated with dramatic physiological symptoms.

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