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PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANINGS OF THE BODY AND SEXUALITY REPORTED BY BRAZILIAN WORKING WOMEN WITH URINARY INCONTINENCE: A CLINICAL QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Aim: To discuss meanings associated with the body and experiences of sexuality reported by Brazilian women with urinary incontinence.

Method: Clinical-qualitative method was used with semi-directed interviews with open-ended questions. The sample consisted of eight women aged 30 to 45 from low-income brackets of a population with complaints of UI and who had never sought treatment. Resulting data was analyzed according to the thematic content analysis, based on psychodynamic approaches. The researchers paid attention to the emic perspective, that is, the insider's point of view or the reasons for certain interviewees' customs/beliefs.

Results: Women's experiences of living with UI are presented in two categories:

(1) A body that is damaged: They report their current body image is one that is marked by a lack of physical and emotional control, worn by time and motherhood, which has resulted in the feeling of growing old prematurely.

(2) An interrupted sexuality: They desire a sexually active life, but UI results in a constant state of unsatisfied desire, since they experience incontinence as something that inhibits sexual pleasure. They experience sexual intercourse as a means to satisfy their partner, but do not derive pleasure from intercourse themselves.

Conclusions: Women with UI - young and within their reproductive period - have reported life experiences that indicated feeling powerless, with a sense of rejection of their body. They exhibited a sense of loss in terms of inability to experience orgasm due to urinary loss, as well as feeling secondary to the satisfaction of their partner.