



Letter of Information
Study Title: Older Adults' Sexual Health-Related Information Needs

Principal Investigator	Research Assistant	Research Assistant
Nicole Dalmer, PhD Assistant Professor Dept of Health, Aging, and Society McMaster University 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4 Email: dalmern@mcmaster.ca	Rachel Gallagher Master's Student Dept of Sociology McMaster University 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4 Email: gallar1@mcmaster.ca	Bryan Hannah Master's Student Dept of Health, Aging, and Society McMaster University 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4 Email: bryanh1@mcmaster.ca

You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dr. Nicole Dalmer of McMaster University. In order to decide whether or not you want to participate in this research study, you should understand what is involved and the potential risks and benefits. This form gives you detailed information about the research study. We encourage you to save a copy of this document for your own records. Once you understand the study, you will be asked to provide consent. Please take your time to make your decision.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This project explores older Canadians' understandings of and experiences with sexual health-related information needs and questions. We are interested in your experiences, thoughts, and questions regarding how you seek, access, and engage with information about sexual health. While sexuality can remain a significant part of later life, little research has explored how older adults navigate available resources or what gaps remain in meeting their informational needs.

For the purposes of this survey, we understand sexual health broadly based on the definition provided by the World Health Organization, who define sexual health as a "state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity." As you complete the survey, we will ask you to think about different information topics connected to sex, sexuality, and sexual health. Some of these topics include: sexual rights, pleasure,

desires, needs, fantasies, beliefs, values, orientation, identity, and activities; eroticism and intimacy; sexually transmitted infections; pregnancy and reproduction; sexual function/dysfunction; sexual violence; and sexual healthcare. While we'll be using the term "sexual health" as a shorthand for the survey, please consider all of these topics when completing the survey.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE STUDY?

If you volunteer to participate in the study, I will ask you to do the following:

- Participate in a 20 - 25 minute online survey
- The survey will include questions about your experience and questions related to sex, sexuality, and sexual health information needs. Please feel free to contact the researcher for clarification on any questions.

Final reports may use quotes from your answers on the survey. However, your name and identifying information will be replaced by a pseudonym.

WILL I BE PAID TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You will have the ability to enter into a raffle to win 1 of 5 Second Cup gift cards of \$50 in appreciation for your time and contributions. If you decide to withdraw and are selected to win the gift card, there will be no consequences to you (i.e., you will still receive the gift card). If you decide to withdraw from the study before completing the survey, please see instructions below in the section (**What if I change my mind about being in the study?**)

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO DOING THE STUDY?

There are potential psychological risks involved in participating in this study. It is possible that when asking you about experiences with sexual health, that there will be instances that were or are difficult or upsetting (e.g., experiences of anxiety, embarrassment, etc.). To mitigate these risks, you can refuse to answer questions if you choose or can save and come back to the survey if you feel overwhelmed or have the option to withdraw from the study. There is also a page of counselling resources that you may wish to consult and access.

There are also social risks involved in this study. You may feel discomfort if others see you filling out a survey about your questions and experiences related to sexual health-related information. As the survey is being conducted virtually, you are encouraged to partake in a setting you deem as comfortable. Importantly, you can refuse to answer questions if you choose or can save and come back to the survey if you feel overwhelmed or have the option to withdraw from the study. Finally, results will be anonymized and reported in aggregate; therefore, it will not be possible to identify individual participants in any reported results.

ARE THERE BENEFITS TO DOING THE STUDY?

The research will not benefit you directly. Your participation will contribute to the

development of knowledge about older adults' sexual health that is intended to inform sexual health support for Canada's aging population. We will gain valuable insights to designing more equitable, accessible, and inclusive approaches to sexual health information resources.

WHO WILL KNOW WHAT I SAY OR DID IN THE STUDY?

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary. We will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. The information/data you provide will be kept at McMaster University and information kept on our computers will be protected by a password. Members of the research team will not disclose whether you participated in the study.

Once the study is complete, quotes, and information from your survey may be used in the final report or publications on the subject. Any information from you will have been anonymized and provided a pseudonym rather than your real name.

Data from this research project will be preserved by the research team and made available to the team for a two-year period following the study.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT BEING IN THE STUDY?

You can choose to stop participating (withdraw) at any time before you submit the survey, including after giving consent or part-way through the survey. If you decide to withdraw part-way through but would still like to be entered into the raffle, please type the word '**DELETE**' into any remaining survey boxes and continue to the end of the survey. This will let us know that you want your responses withdrawn.

Please note: Once you submit the survey without indicating a desire to withdraw, your data cannot be removed, as the survey is anonymous and we will not be able to link your responses back to you.

To be entered into the raffle draw, you must complete the optional second form at the end of the survey. If you do not submit this secondary information, you will not be entered into the draw.

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHAT WAS LEARNED FROM THE STUDY?

You may request that the team send you a copy by mail or by email. This will be indicated at the end of the survey. We anticipate having results to share by Sept 2026.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact:

Nicole Dalmer, PhD
Assistant Professor

Department of Health, Aging and Society – McMaster University
1280 Main Street West,
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4
E-mail: dalmern@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance (#7721).

If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Office
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
E-mail: mreb@mcmaster.ca