

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT DISTRICT
MALAZGIRT İLÇESİNDE YAŞAYAN EVLİ KADINLARIN CİNSELLİĞE BAKIŞLARI

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out in order to determine the sexuality perspectives of 20 married women living in Malazgirt district, and to discover their sexual cultural behavior patterns, which are described as a private area and are not easy to share with others. The study group of the research consisted of 20 married women living in the town of Malazgirt and participating in sexual education courses organized by the Family Support Center. One of the researchers has been working in the relevant center for three years and received verbal permission from the institution administration. The women participating in the study participated in this study on a voluntary basis. The research is a qualitative model study and was carried out with field research method and interview technique. The data were collected between 03.11.2021 and 24.11.2021 with in-depth face-to-face interview technique using a structured interview form. The obtained qualitative data were first coded in the computer environment qualitatively and then quantitatively, and analyzed with the help of SPSS (22.0) package program. In Malazgirt, sexual issues are still considered as a very private area. The average age of the women participating in the study was 35.8, but only one third of them perceived sexuality positively and used expressions in this direction. The vast majority of women either ignored sexuality or considered it an ordinary ask. The times of sexual intercourse were limited according to the family structure and child status; the large family structure and the number of children were effective in this. Approximately one-third of the participants received information about sexuality from their families, and one-third from their spouses. The rate of those who get information about sexuality from the media is surprisingly low (6.9%). It has been shown that the married women, living in Malazgirt district, who participated in the study, are restricted in exercising their free will in relation to sexuality and sexual intercourse,

Fikret Efe¹,

Elif Gündüz²

CORRESPONDENCE

¹Doç. Dr. Sakarya University Humanities and

Social Sciences Social Work Department,

ORCID: 0000-0003-0621-2605

E-mail: efe@sakarya.edu.tr

²Social Worker, ORCID: 0000-0001-6114-7768,

E-mail: elif199371@gmail.com

DOI: 10.54467/trjasw.1179289

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

that they feel pressured, and that therefore a considerable number of the participants do not realize their sexual needs and desires at the level of satisfaction. Although a significant number of women use sexuality as a means of power against their husbands to achieve their goals, the fact that they do not know that sexual desire and desire is a right and an important need for women as well as for men, or that they consider it a shame and a sin, has created a barrier to the expression of their sexual feelings.

Keywords: Malazgirt district, woman, sexuality, sexual intercourse.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Malazgirt ilçesinde yaşayan 20 evli kadının cinselliğe bakış açısının tespiti, mahrem alan olarak nitelendirdikleri ve paylaşımlarının kolay olmadığı cinsel kültür davranış kalıplarının keşfi amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Malazgirt ilçesinde yaşayan, Aile Destek Merkezi'nce düzenlenen cinsel eğitim kurslarına katılan 20 evli kadın oluşturmuştur. Araştırmacıdan biri ilgili merkezde üç yıldan beri çalışmakta olup kurum idaresinden sözlü olarak izin almıştır. Araştırmada yer alan kadınların bu çalışmaya gönüllülük esasına dayalı bir şekilde katılımı sağlanmıştır. Araştırmamız nitel model bir çalışma olup alan araştırması yöntemi ve mülakat tekniğiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler yapılandırılmış mülakat formu kullanılarak derinlemesine yüz yüze görüşme tekniğiyle 03.11.2021 ve 24.11.2021 tarihleri arasında toplanmıştır. Elde edilen nitel veriler bilgisayar ortamına önce nitel, sonra nicel kodlamaları yapılarak girilmiş ve SPSS (22.0) paket programı yardımıyla analizleri gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmaya katılan 20 evli kadının yaş ortalaması 35,8 olup, ancak üçte biri cinsel birlikteliği olumlu algılamış ve bu doğrultuda ifadeler kullanmıştır. Kadınların büyük çoğunluğu cinsel birlikteliği ya önemsememiş ya da sıradan bir görev olarak değerlendirmiştir. Hamilelik dönemlerinde cinsel birliktelik bebeğe (fetus) zarar vereceği kaygısıyla cinsel yaşamda önemli sınırlandırmalara gidilmiştir. Cinsel birliktelik vakitleri aile yapısı ve çocuk durumuna göre sınırlılık arz etmiş; geniş aile yapısı ve çocuk sayısı bunda etkin olmuştur. Katılımcıların yaklaşık üçte biri cinsellik hakkında bilgisini ailesinden, üçte biri eşinden edinmiştir. Medyadan cinsellikle ilgili bilgi edinilenlerin oranı oldukça düşüktür (%6,9). Araştırmaya katılan evli kadınların cinsellik ve cinsel birliktelik konusunda hür iradelerini kullanmada sınırlı oldukları, kendilerini baskı altında algıladıkları, bundan dolayı da önemli sayıdaki katılımcının cinsel ihtiyaç ve arzularını doyum düzeyinde gerçekleştirmedikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Kadınların önemli bir kısmı cinselliği hedeflerine ulaşmada eşlerine karşı bir güç olarak kullansa da, cinsel

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

arzu ve isteğin kadınlar için de erkekler kadar hak ve önemli bir ihtiyaç olduğunu bilmemeleri ya da ayıp, günah kabul etmeleri, cinsel duygularını dillendirmenin önüne set oluşturmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Malazgirt ilçesi, kadın, cinsellik, cinsel birliktelik

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexuality, which is an inevitable element of life, is an interaction with many aspects such as social, moral, cultural, psychological and biological. Individual characteristics, past experiences, emotions, behavioral examples, traumas that affect the psychology of the person determine their attitudes towards sexuality (Bilgin & Kömürçü, 2016). The meanings of sexual practices are drawn from specific cultures and their beliefs about the self and the world, and cultural gender systems construct different sexual beliefs and practices for men and women (Blackwood, 2000). This is why in many societies it is considered inappropriate for women to express their needs or desires for sexual intercourse (George, 1998).

For centuries, women's perceptions were compared to those of the male gender (Peplau, Garnets & Katz, 2000), and the differences between men and women were accepted as women's deficits, and women struggled in almost all areas of life (Crawford & Popp, 2010). According to Rulman (Komut, 2011) when male philosophers have thought about historical evolution of women, they usually did it to determine, for example, their lack of soul (Aristotle), their lack of reason (Kant), or the limits of their emotions. As a natural consequence of such evaluations, women are prevented from freely expressing their sexual feelings and thoughts.

Although the meanings attributed to women vary from society to society, from time to time and exhibit cultural relativity, the concepts of fertility, motherhood and productivity have generally been at the forefront (Akyüz, 2018; George, 1998). Throughout the historical process, women have gained value as a conductive element that they find their position with the relative meanings attributed to themselves in the social and cultural environment in which they live. They were considered sometimes as the basis of culture according to the perspective of positive discrimination and sometimes as a conductive element that ensures continuity through the transmission of culture to future generations (Akyüz, 2018). However, it is only in recent decades that women have been able to assert their equality with men for the first time in history (Giddens, 1992).

As a result of the international developments towards the end of the twentieth century, it can be stated that

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

the approach to the status of women has changed along with the change in the perception of women (Yumuş, 2011). Although many studies have been conducted on sexuality in western societies and eastern societies such as China and India (Yuxin, Petula, & Lun, 2007; George, 1998), considering that sexuality is still seen as taboo in the Turkish society and avoided to be discussed, and therefore the silence in the field of sexuality, whose subject is women, needs to be examined (Komut, 2011). Again, the roles and responsibilities that the social work discipline can assume in defining the problems encountered in these issues and making the solution of these problems sustainable have not been defined. It is hoped that this and similar studies will help to close the gap in this area.

Only by implementing research on women and sexuality and the recommendations derived from it is possible for women to freely express their ideas about their own bodies and sexuality in marriage, as well as their sexual wishes and desires, and to ensure women's visibility. Very limited amount of researches and publications identifying such problems in our society hinder the development of sustainable solutions to these problems. In particular, the number of studies on social work intervention areas are almost non-existent. There are no studies on women's sexuality in Malazgirt district, which is the subject of our research, where patriarchal family structure prevails and women's position is secondary. Our study is important in that it contributes to research on the understanding of sexuality of women living in Malazgirt, where traditional social structure and culture are still effective, and may encourage the reaserches for future studies in this topic.

METHOD

Our study was conducted using the field research method, in-depth interview technique, and structured interview form. The study group consisted of 20 married women from Malazgirt district who volunteered to participate in the study. They were among the approximately 200 women who participated in the sex education courses organized by the Family Support Center in 2022. The interview form contained a total of 26 questions about the women's sociodemographic characteristics (age, education level, employment status, family structure, etc.), sexuality, and sexual intercourse. The qualitative data obtained were coded and transferred to the computer environment, first performing a quantitative analysis with the SPSS program (22.0) and then a qualitative analysis. This article gives the main results of the field research.

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

RESULTS

Twenty married women participated in the study. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 58 years, averaged 35.8 years of age, had been married at least one year and no more than 40 years, averaged 19.05 years of marriage, and had 2.7 children; 14 (70%) were arranged marriages and 6 (30%) met and married. Of the participants, 3 (15%) were illiterate, 1 (5%) could read and write, 4 (20%) had an elementary school degree, 4 (20%) had a middle school degree, 6 (30%) had a high school degree, 1 (5%) had an associate's degree, 1 (5%) had a bachelor's degree, 17 (85%) were housewives, and 3 (15%) were civil servants.

Fifteen (75%) of the participants had a nuclear family and 5 (25%) had an extended family. Seventeen (85%) had children and 3 (15%) did not. Of the families with children, 14 (70%) had a children's room in the house, while 6 (30%) did not. 12 (60%) had stove heating, while 8 (40%) had central heating. From this point of view, it can be seen that Malazgirt district still preserves the traditional socio-cultural features of the traditional society and continues the transition process.

Table 1. Status of experiencing sexual problems during pregnancy

Problem Status	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	11	64,7
No	6	35,3
Total	17	100,0
No Children	3	
	20	

While 11 (64.7%) of the pregnant women who participated in the study experienced problems with their husbands regarding sexual intercourse during pregnancy, 6 (35.3%) had no problems. The responses indicate that the problems experienced and the extent of their severity varied.

“P2: “I had problems during pregnancy because I avoided sexual intercourse, especially in the first pregnancy, because I thought it would harm my baby. But my husband wanted us to be together because he thought nothing would happen. In the first months I did what he wanted, but in the last months we stopped having sexual intercourse because there was a risk of premature birth. My husband pushed me a lot during this time, and most of the time these situations ended in a fight.”

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

P3: "My husband never took me to the hospital during pregnancy, and I didn't want to have sex with him in case something happened to my baby."

P5: "I had a lot of edema during pregnancy, I was very swollen and could hardly move. Unfortunately, my husband had no understanding, I had to have sex with him when he asked me to, but I had big difficulties."

Judging from the women's answers to this question, they had problems with their spouses and avoided sexual intercourse during pregnancy due to insufficient information about sexual life during this period. Different perceptions about sexuality between spouses have a strong impact on the quality of life of couples (Bilgiç, Demirel, & Dağlar, 2018). During and after pregnancy, conditions such as decreased desire during intercourse (O'Malley, 2021), sexual stimulation, and satisfaction may lead to a decrease in the frequency of sexual intercourse, and disagreements and sexual problems may occur between spouses (Kouakou et al., 2010). One of the factors that cause this situation is the assumptions and attitudes about sexuality during pregnancy (Kouakou et al., 2010).

Our study is in line with the findings of other studies; due to the prejudice of women experiencing pregnancy, they believe that they should stop or terminate their sexual activities because they might harm the baby during this period (Trutnovsky et al, 2006, <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/sex>, cited in. (Bilgiç, Demirel, & Dağlar, 2018; Kouakou et al, 2010; Shojaa et al, 2009, Naim et al, 2000). In addition, some studies emphasize that sexual intercourse during pregnancy is normal unless there is a risk situation, that it is a natural process during pregnancy, and that there is no danger. (<https://www.oviahealth.com/guide/10124/sex-during-third-trimester/>; <https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/sex/>). Some hormones released during intercourse are hormones that the woman and her baby need, and the fact that intercourse takes place without contraception is especially pleasurable for some couples. Only in special cases or in high-risk pregnancies should women be counseled about sexual intercourse and urged to be more careful (<http://www.babygaga.com/10-fears-and-truths-about-sex-during-pregnancy>). The lack of information channels led to such misperception among women, and 64.7% of women who became pregnant due to incomplete information had problems with their husbands as a result.

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

Women's sexual health is an important part of life at any age, especially during pregnancy and postpartum, which bring biological, psychological, and social changes that can affect sexual health (Gutzeit, 2020). Despite the complexity of the issue, sexual function has been shown to decline during pregnancy and not return to baseline levels in the postpartum period (Gutzeit, 2020).

Table 2. The state of wanting to have sexual intercourse after having a child

Change in Demand	Frequency	Valid Percent
Change happened, decreased	13	76,5
No change, remained the same	4	23,5
Total	17	100,0
No Children	3	
	20	

Thirteen (76.5%) of the women who participated in the study and had children stated that their sexual desire changed after having children, in the direction of a decrease, while 4 (23.5%) stated that there was no change. Looking at the participants' statements, we find that they attributed the decrease in their sexual desire after childbirth to reasons such as children, work, fatigue, and their attitude toward sexuality;

P4: "My husband is very fond of sexuality. That's why it was a constant thing for us, I wasn't very enthusiastic anyway, after I had a child my workload increased and sexuality was an extra task for me. My little desire became less and less."

P6: "I mean, since sexuality did not mean much to me, my desire decreased after having a child."

P7: "After I had my child, I was devoted to his care, so there was a decrease. I was already tired and there was an extra tiredness after the baby and I did not want sexual intercourse."

Since the mother, who was given the responsibility for child care, had to perform household tasks on top of that, sexuality was seen as a duty and avoided so as not to create a new task. It was also found that living conditions influenced women's attitudes toward sexuality.

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

Table 3. Status of what sexuality means for women

State of Meaning	Frequency	Valid Percent
Need and Pleasure	2	10,0
Something Beautiful	3	15,0
Shame and Sin	1	5,0
Duty	6	30,0
Important	2	10,0
Unnecessary	2	10,0
Unimportant	4	20,0
Total	20	100,0

Looking at the responses of the women who participated in the survey to the question “What does sexuality mean to you?”, 6 (30%) of the women describe sexuality as a duty, 4 (20%) as unimportant, 3 (15%) as something beautiful, 2 (10%) as unnecessary, 2 (10%) as important, 2 (10%) as a need and pleasure, 1 (5%) as a shame and sin.

The analysis of the responses shows that a significant proportion of women attach a negative meaning to sexuality. It is assumed that women do not understand themselves as subjects and cannot fully grasp sexuality. It turns out that the majority of women place themselves in the second level and does not recognize sexuality for themselves. The internalization of negative messages about their sexuality in Turkey has made it difficult for many women to make free and informed decisions about their sexual experiences, thus limiting their opportunities to establish a healthy sexual life for themselves (Avcı & Özdedeli, 2015).

Table 4. The use of sexual power as a force

Power use Status	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	17	85,0
No	3	15,0
Total	20	100,0

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

Seventeen (85%) of the women who participated in the study stated that they used sexuality as a power, while 3 (15%) stated that they did not. When we look at the answers of the women to the question “Is sexuality a power you can use against your husband?”

P20; “Yes, my husband has a preference for sexuality and does what I want at that moment.”

P19; “Yes, it is a power I can use against my spouse. I can make my spouse do what I want with sex.”

P18; “Yes, it is a power I can use against my spouse, since we are newly married, I can use sexuality against my spouse a lot.”

P15; “Yes, I do. Because men are not like us in this regard, they are weak.”

P14; “Yes, I can use it. I make my spouse do what I want through sex.”

From the women’s answers, it is clear that they take advantage of this situation because they believe that their men are sexually weak. The women used the men’s excessive lust as an opportunity and tried to realize their desires in this direction.

Table 5. Situation at the time of the union

Time Condition	Frequency	Valid Percent
Evening	9	45,0
Night	10	50,0
All the time	1	5,0
Total	20	100,0

Sexual intercourse takes place at night for 10 women (50%) and in the evening for 9 women (45%). The answers to the question are as follows;

P2: “Since we have children, we can’t be alone at home during the day and evening. Since we wait until the children are asleep, we have sexual intercourse at night”.

P3; “Since our house is crowded and we have a culture, sexual intercourse happens at night when everyone goes to bed.”

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

P4; “Sexual intercourse happens at night when everyone is asleep; we have sex at night without anyone hearing because we always think that sex is something shameful.”

P12; “Sexual intercourse happens at night. We are ashamed of my children; we wait for them to sleep.”

P13: “Sexual intercourse usually takes place at night because we are a crowded family, I wait until everyone is asleep, I don’t want anyone to know. It is easier for me to shower at night. Since we live with my husband’s family, it would be a shame for us to have sexual intercourse outside the night.”

P18; “Because the times when we are alone with my husband at home are at night, we have sexual intercourse at night. Since my husband’s family also lives with us, sexual intercourse does not happen at all times.”

From the women’s answers to the questions it is clear that they associate sexual intercourse with the evening and night time. Especially the large family structure and the presence of children at home make couples feel uncomfortable. The fact that women perceive sexuality as shameful and believe that it should be hidden has led them to perform sexual intercourse at times when everyone is asleep or in privacy.

As can be seen from these data, sexuality is still perceived by district residents as a behavior that must be hidden, and they are uncomfortable having sexual intercourse with their spouses. Sexual intercourse does not occur at times when people want or need to have sexual intercourse, but at relatively late times when household members are sleeping, which is considered appropriate by society.

Table 6. The importance of the woman’s request in the union

Importance Status	Frequency	Valid Percent
Important	12	60,0
Insignificant	8	40,0
Total	20	100,0

For sexual intercourse, 12 (60%) of the women reported that their own wishes were important, while 8 (40%) reported that they were not important. Although 60% of the women who participated in our study stated that their own wishes and desires were important, the fact that 40% of them thought that their wishes and desires

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

were not important shows the prevalence and suppression of the problem.

For centuries, women have found their place in the social and cultural structure in which they live, defining relative meanings for themselves, sometimes as the main element of the culture and sometimes as the guiding element in passing on the culture to the new generation (Akyüz, 2018).

The fact that 40% of the respondents consider the woman's opinion insignificant, especially when the woman is also a subject in sexual intercourse and her desire should be important in the realization of sexual intercourse, stems from the fact that they adopt the patterns set by society for women's sexuality.

Table 7. The situation of women telling their spouses about their sexual intercourse requests

State of Making Demands	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	11	55,0
No	9	45,0
Total	20	100,0

To the question "Can you tell your husband about your demand at any time?" 11 (55%) of the women answered yes, while 9 (45%) answered no. Looking at the response rates, we see that they are very close to each other and that a significant proportion of women cannot express their demands for reasons such as embarrassment and shame. The answers given by the participants explain this situation very well;

P6; "No, I don't think that my desire is important, so even if I have a desire, I don't tell my husband about it. Besides, we have learned that sexuality is a shameful thing, so I can't say it because I feel like I will do something shameful if I say it."

P4; "My request is not very important, it usually happens if my husband wants it, I never have any sexual desire or demand."

P6; "No, I cannot say it; I am ashamed to say it, even if it is my husband of 20 years."

When we look at the answers above, we see that although women have desires, they hesitate to express them, and some are even embarrassed to tell their husbands.

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

Participants' inadequate sources of information about sexuality meant that the concept of sexuality was not fully understood and women had difficulty expressing themselves.

In our country, understandings of sexuality shaped according to gender roles are instilled in children at a very early age. Girls are warned that it is shameful to see their underwear, even by accident, while playing. The genitals associated with shame; It causes women to perceive sexuality as shame. Again, the social elements added to this basis determine women's sexuality and sexual behavior of women (Dinçer, 2007). It has been observed that sexual desires and desires are not unique to men, but that these impulses exist in women as well as men, that women try to suppress these impulses and do not express them against their spouses.

Table 8. Forced sexual intercourse by their husbands when women do not want sexual intercourse

Forced Sexual Intercourse	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	17	85,0
No	3	15,0
Total	20	100,0

Seventeen of the women (85%) stated that their husbands forced them to have sexual intercourse even when they did not want to and that they had sexual intercourse with their husbands, while 3 of them stated that their husbands did not force them. This shows that women are forced to have sexual intercourse, that they do not have enough power to use and realize their own will, and that there is a male-dominated relationship in sexual intercourse. One of the participants (P2) stated that traditional values play an important role in forming such understanding: "Yes, he tries to persuade me, for him it is my duty towards him. He does not accept my refusal because he thinks like that": from this statement it is clear that it is natural for the spouse to persuade her and exercise power (impose his will on her) and that she easily gives in. On the other hand, 18 (90 percent) of the women said that they do not force their husbands to have sexual intercourse when their husbands do not want to have sexual intercourse, and 2 (10 percent) said that they force their husbands to have sexual intercourse. While the number of women who force (use force) their wives to have sexual intercourse even if they do not want to is 2, the number of men who force their will on their wives even if they do not want to is 17, indicating that the majority of men force their wives to have sexual intercourse. They explained that even if women had demands and desires, they would give up if their husbands did not want these. Women are considered to have a subordinate position in terms of their sexuality and are not as oppressive and dominant as men. The fact that 19 of the women (95%) reported that their husbands took a negative attitude towards them when they resisted sexual intercourse shows that sexual life is dominated by men. P1; "When I don't feel like having sexual in-

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

tercourse, my spouse takes a negative attitude. Because he doesn't like to be rejected. And then he sulks, and since he prolongs this sulking, I usually don't refuse my husband's requests.”, P3; *“Yes, he puts up a negative attitude, if he asks for sexual intercourse and I don't respond, he tells everyone in the morning that his wife is not being a woman to him and tries to pave the way for a second marriage.*”, P9; *“Yes, to convince me not to refuse him when he asks for it.”* These statements summarize the current situation. Such a one-sided oppressive situation, if we consider the attitude of women when their husbands are averse to sexual intercourse, 16 (80%) of the women in contrast to the men stated that they do not take a negative attitude towards their husbands when they are averse to sexual intercourse, while only 4 (20%) of them take a negative attitude. Comparing the attitude towards the spouse in case of aversion by sex, it is found that women are more understanding towards their spouses and the majority of them do not have a negative attitude towards sex towards their spouses.

Table 9. The situation of women's husbands requesting anal sex

Request Status	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	8	40,0
No	12	60,0
Total	20	100,0

When it was examined whether the women's husbands demanded anal intercourse from them and how they responded, 12 (60%) of the women indicated that their husbands did not demand anal intercourse, while 8 (40%) indicated that their husbands demanded anal intercourse but they did not comply with the demand. Looking at the answers given;

P19: “It used to happen in the first years of our marriage, I did not accept this request because it was a sin, we used to argue with my husband, but now my husband has stopped requesting it.”

P15: “Yes, it happens, but I don't allow it, and because I don't want it, we have a lot of problems and arguments.”

P13: “Yes, it happened a few times, but I didn't accept it because I don't want to try it because it's haram (forbidden in Islam).”

From the responses, it appears that men demand anal sex from their wives, but the wives do not accept this and therefore have problems. The fact that 40 percent of men demand anal sex from their wives, even if they

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

refuse, and that they are relatively persistent in doing so is not only interesting, but also shows that the prevailing culture tends to disappear to a significant extent. In the verse in the Qur'an and in Surat al-Baqara (2/222); the prohibition of anal sex with the provision "approach them from where Allah has commanded you" has caused women to show sensitivity on this issue, and it has been understood that religious values have an effect on women's perspective and acceptance of sexuality. The fact that women do not accept this form of sexual intercourse because it is religiously forbidden shows that their religious beliefs still have an important place in their social and sexual lives, and that women are not helpless when it comes to finding a legitimate basis such as the religious rules, and that they impose their will on their husbands to the end.

Ten (34.5%) of the women reported that they were informed about sexuality by their families, 10 (34.5%) by their husbands, 7 (24.1%) by their boyfriends, and 2 (6.9%) by the media. When we look at women's sources of information about sexuality, we find that the sources are not healthy and scientific sources are not used. Inadequate sources of information resulted in women not being adequately informed about sexuality. It was admitted to the researcher during the interview that they did not receive information that sexuality is a physiological state, that they have urges just like men, and that women can also demand sexuality. The answers of P7 and P6 to the corresponding question explain the situation: *"I cannot tell my husband about my desire for sexual intercourse; I am ashamed to tell him, even if he has been my husband for 20 years"*. P6 said, *"I don't think my desire for sexual intercourse is important. That's why I don't tell my spouse about it even if I have a desire. Also, we learned that sexuality is a shameful thing, so I can't say it because I feel like I'm doing something shameful if I say it."* From the participants' statements, it appears that the meaning of "shame" associated with the term "sexual intercourse" prevents them from having sexual intercourse. In a study conducted in India, it was found that women feel ashamed to express their sexual desires and needs and that these feelings prevent them from having sexual intercourse. (Kouakou ve ark., 2010).

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

Table 10. The effect of family type on the time of sexual intercourse

Family Types Status		The Times of Sexual Intercourse			Total
		Evening	Night	All the Time	
Nucleary family	Number	7	7	1	15
	%	77,8	70,0	100,0	75,5
Extended Family	Number	2	3	0	5
	%	22,2	30,0	0,0	25,0
Total	Number	9	10	1	20
	%	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

In our study, it was found that family type does not have a great influence on the timing of sexual intercourse, and sexual intercourse in both family types takes place in the evening or at night.

Sexuality, on the other hand, is greatly affected by the individual's relationship with the environment, living conditions and the culture in which she lives (Kingsberg & Janata, 2007). Female sexuality is affected by the components of her and her partner's environment. Social culture plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of sexual health of both women and men. Traditions, on the other hand, determine how a woman should live her sexuality throughout her life (Avcı & Özdedeli, 2015).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be observed that married women living in Malazgirt district, where the traditional cultural structure is still relatively dominant, are restricted in exercising their free will regarding sexuality and intercourse, feel pressured, and therefore a considerable number of participants do not fulfill their sexual needs and desires at the level of satisfaction. Even though a considerable number of women use sexuality as a means of power against their husbands to achieve their goals, the fact that they do not know that sexual desire and wish is a right and an important need for women as well as for men, or that they consider it a shame and a sin, prevents them from expressing their sexual feelings. This situation shows that sexual life in Malazgirt is male dominated. The fact that women have misinformation and prejudice that sexual intercourse during pregnancy is harmful to the baby has reduced the quality of their sexual experience, and sexuality has been perceived as a duty rather than a need, pleasure and relaxation. It has been understood that women do not see themselves as subjects in their marriage and sexuality, that the majority of women put themselves in the background, that

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

they are not aware of the fact that sexuality is an important factor for them in their marriage, and that they realize their sexuality and sexual intercourse for their spouses. The impact of the female subculture, rather than the male culture, is believed to be important in creating such a situation. In addition, it has been observed that women do not accept their husbands' requests for anal and oral sex on the grounds that it is religiously forbidden, that religious acceptance still has an important place in their social and sexual lives, that women are not helpless when they find a basis accepted by the society, such as religious rules, and that they impose their decisions on their husbands to the end.

Evidence-based training programs should be offered to women to correct their prejudices and eliminate their lack of knowledge. Also their participation in training should be encouraged and supported. In this regard, we believe that better results can be achieved with the responsibility and cooperation of institutions such as the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In order to understand how widespread this research, which was conducted in Malazgirt district using the field research method, is in the district and in this cultural area, it is necessary to conduct research using the survey/screening method.

REFERENCES

- Akyüz, M. (2018). İçeridekinin Bakış Açısıyla Kadın. Doktora Tezi , 1-204. Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Bakara Suresi (2.Cüz 222 Ayet).
- Bilgiç, D., DEMİREL, G., & DAĞLAR, G. (2018). Gebelerin Gebelik Dönemine ve Doğuma İlişkin Mitlerinin Belirlenmesi. Zeynep Kamil Tıp Bülteni, 49 (1), 59-64.
- Bilgin, Z., & Kömürcü, N. (2016). Kadının Cinsel Sağlığı ve Kanıt Temelli Yaklaşımlar. (18(64)), s. 48-55.
- Blackwood, E. (2000). Culture and women's sexualities. Journal of Social Issues, 56(2), 223–238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00162>
- Diñer, Ö. (2007). Namus ve Bekaret: Kuşaklar Arasında Değişen Ne? İki Kuşaktan Kadınların Cinsellik Algıları. Yüksek Lisans Tezi , 5-61. Ankara.
- Ertem, G., & Sevil, Ü. (2010). Gebeliğin Cinselliğe Etkisi, Dirim Tıp Gazetesi, 1 (85), 40-47.

PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN MALAZGIRT

GeorgeA. (1998). Differential perspectives of men and women in Mumbai, India on sexual relations and negotiations within marriage, Pages 87-96, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080\(98\)90011-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(98)90011-8)

Gutzeit, O., Levy, L., & Lowenstein, L., (2020). Postpartum Female Sexual Function: Risk Factors for Postpartum Sexual Dysfunction, *Sex Med.* 2020 Mar; 8(1): 8–13. Ulaşım adresi: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7042171/>

Giddens, A. (1992). *The transformation of intimacy: Sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. [Google Scholar]

Kingsberg SA, Janata JW. Female sexual disorder: assessment, diagnosis and treatment. *Urol Clin N Am* 2007;34: 497–506.

Komut, S. (2011). Türkiye’de Kadın, Cinsellik ve Kürtaj. *Sosyal Bilimler ve Beşeri Dergisi*, 3 (1), 87-95.

Kouakou KP, Doumbia Y, Djanhan LE, Ménin MM, Kouaho JC, Djanhan Y., Reality of the impact of pregnancy on sexuality. Results about review of 200 Ivoirians pregnant women, *Journal de Gynecologie, Obstetrique et Biologie de la Reproduction*, 40(1):36-41. DOI: 10.1016/j.jgyn.2010.04.006 PMID: 20605371

Avcı, K., & Özdedeli, K. (2015). Kadının Cinselliği ve Kültürel Farklılıklar. *Kadın Cinsel Sağlığı*, 224-230. *Androloji Bülteni*.

O’Malley, D., Higgins, A. & Smith, V. (2021), Exploring the Complexities of Postpartum Sexual Health. *Curr Sex Health Rep* 13, 128–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11930-021-003156>

Peplau, L.A., Garnets, L.D. and Katz, P.A. (2000). *Women’s Sexualities: New Perspectives on Sexual Orientation and Gender* ISBN: 978-1-405-10080-9

The truth about Sex during pregnancy. <http://www.babygaga.com/10-fears-and-truths-about-sex-during-pregnancy>. (tarih yok). 01.05.2022 tarihinde alındı.

<https://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy/keeping-well/sex/sex-during-pregnancy>, erişim tarihi: 08.03.2022.

Yuxin, P., Petula, S. H. & Lun, N.M. (2007) *Studies on Women’s Sexuality in China since 1980: A Critical Review*, 202-212. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi>.

Yumuş, A. (2011). *Kalkınma Planları Çerçevesinde Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Anlayışının Ekonomik, Toplumsal ve Siyasal Boyutları.* Yayınlanmamış Uzmanlık Tezi, 28. T.C. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü.

<https://www.oviahealth.com/guide/10124/sex-during-third-trimester/> erişim tarihi: 03.03.2022.