



Health  
Northern Sydney  
Local Health District

# Sexuality after stroke: What information is available online for stroke survivors?

Margaret McGrath, Chloe Linehan Ciara Guiry Sandra Lever



**UCC**

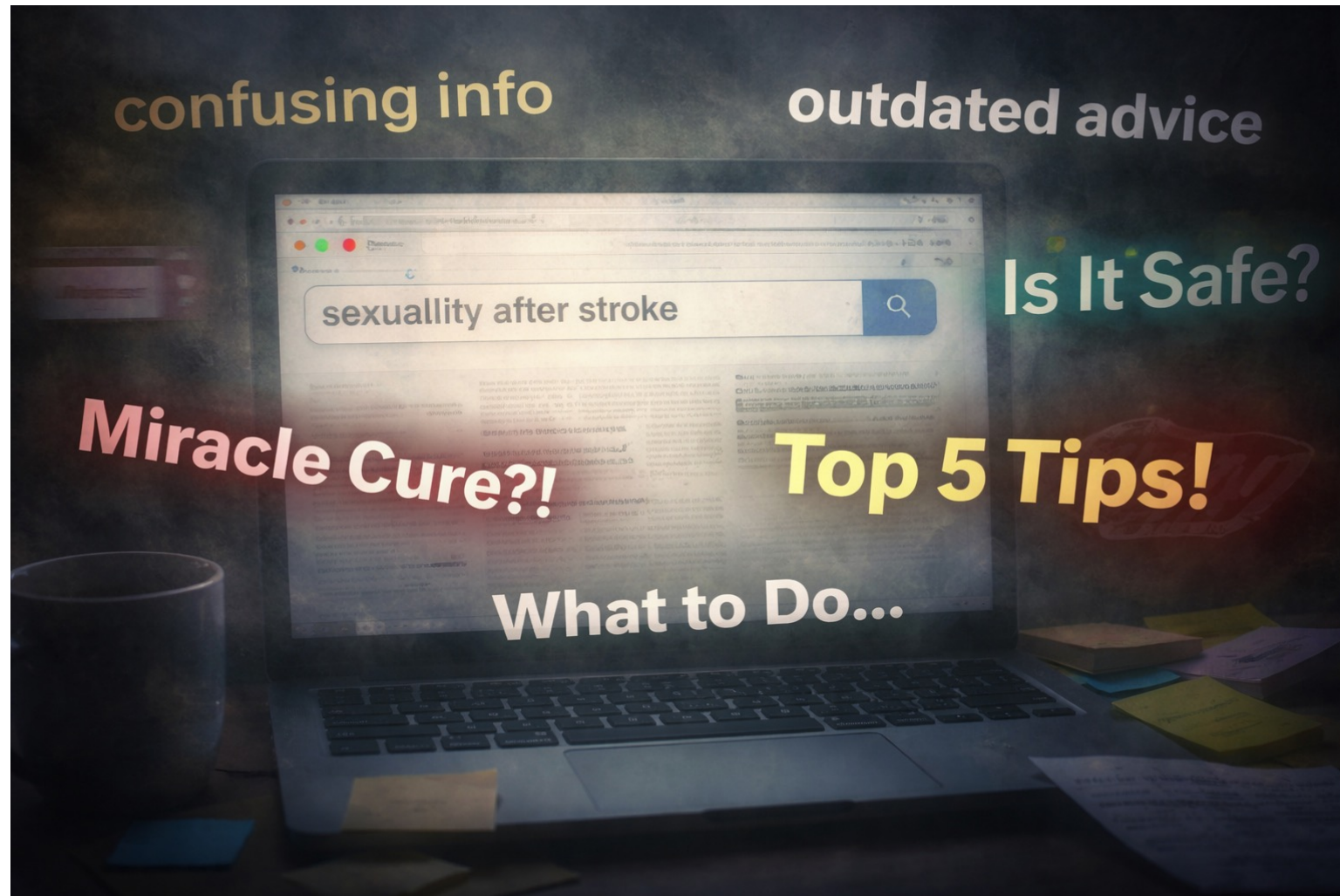
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh  
University College Cork, Ireland

- Sexuality is central to quality of life
- Stroke frequently impacts multiple aspects of sexuality including
  - Sexual function
  - Intimacy
  - Relationships
  - Self esteem
- Clinical guidelines recommend that sexuality should be addressed during rehabilitation but practice audits consistently demonstrate this rarely happens

# Sexuality after stroke – what happens when no one talks about it ?



# But what are they actually finding ?



# The problem

- Is the information comprehensive ?
- Is it inclusive ?
- Is it accessible ?

# Methods

- Google™ search
  - 50 sexuality + stroke keywords
  - Included credible educational materials
  - English language only
- Analysed content
  - Coverage of WHO Sexuality Domains
  - Messaging and framing
  - Readability



# What we found

29 online resources



CA (n=9)



US (n=7)



UK (n=4)



AU (n=4)



IE (n=3)



NZ (n=1)

Stroke specific sexual education materials (n=18)

General stroke education with sexuality included (n=11)

## Included

- Sex and physical function
- Basic intimacy
- Sexual activity

## Absent

- Pleasure
- Emotional well being
- Reproductive and sexual health
- Sexual identity and diversity

# Readability

- Readability was moderate but still problematic
  - Mean Flesch Reading Ease: 63.7 (plain English range )
  - Mean Grade Level ~ 8th Grade
  - ! Most resources exceeded recommended patient education levels (typically,  $\leq 6$ th grade)
  - ! Large variability
    - Reading ease ranged from 43.8 to 95.9
    - Grade levels ranged from 3.3 to 14.9

→ Some materials highly accessible — others extremely difficult



# Why this matters ?

- Reinforces silence around sexuality
- Reduces holistic recovery
- Excludes diverse survivors
- Leaves people unsupported
- Sexual wellbeing ≠ just physical function



# What is needed ?

- ✓ Sexuality embedded in stroke rehabilitation
- ✓ Inclusive, evidence-based resources
- ✓ Attention to emotional & identity aspects
- ✓ Co-designed education with survivors



**If sexuality is central to being human —  
it must be central to stroke recovery too.**



Follow up ?

[margaretmcgrath@ucc.ie](mailto:margaretmcgrath@ucc.ie)