

## S38-01

### SEXUALITY AND HOMOSEXUALITY IN OLD AGE

#### E. Krebs-Roubicek

*Private Practice, Zurich, Switzerland*

The nature and frequency of sexual activity among the elderly are unknown. The elderly often view sexuality as an expression of passion, affection, admiration and loyalty; a renewal of romance. Sexual activity is a means for the elderly to affirm physical functioning, to maintain a strong sense of identity and to establish self-confidence.

However, not all elderly persons have positive attitudes towards sexuality. Even healthy elderly persons may internalize the stereotypes towards aging. The elderly will be viewed as:

- Asexual invalids;
- Dirty old men;
- Lecherous old women.

Negative attitude about masturbation and homosexuality can interfere with sexual expression. Many elderly homosexual persons have not publicly revealed their sexual preference. They may experience additional stress due to a perceived need to hide their sexual orientation.