**THE SOCIO-SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ASSESSMENT TOOL- REVISED: REVISING THE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

**Katya Gessie,1 B.A, Shelley L. Watson,1 Ph.D., Kelly D. Harding,1 Ph.D., & Yona Lunsky,2 Ph.D.**

**1Laurentian University, 2Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**

**Objective:** Researchers have demonstrated that sex education is often not available for individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ID); as a result, these individuals become vulnerable targets for sexual abuse, are at an increased risk for sexually transmitted infections and other health issues. This vulnerability may be because of a lack of understanding of appropriate sexual behaviour and recognition of what constitutes inappropriate sexual behaviour. The Socio-Sexual Knowledge and Attitudes Assessment Tool – Revised (SSKAAT-R; Griffiths & Lunsky, 2003) was developed to provide a comprehensive assessment of areas of socio-sexual knowledge and attitudes for people with ID. In the current study, the efficacy of the SSKAAT-R in assessing current sexual issues for individuals with ID is addressed.

**Methods**: The current study is a replication of a 1999 study by Griffiths and Lunsky, which examined the aspects of socio-sexual assessment and education that were considered important for people with ID. Current users of the SSKAAT-R, including psychologists, clinicians, and staff members who work with individuals with ID, have been invited to complete a questionnaire with respect to their current use of the SSKAAT-R. Example questions include: *Are there specific topics that you believe should be added to a revised version of the SSKAAT-R?* and *Please rate your perceived importance of the following topics for assessment and sexual education of individuals with intellectual disabilities*. The current study differs from that of Griffiths and Lunsky because current users have also been invited to participate in a semi-structured interview in order to ascertain what aspects of the measure they would like to see changed in an updated version (SSKAAT-3). In partnership with the publishing company, Stoelting, questionnaires have been sent to individuals who have previously purchased the SSKAAT-R and the publishing company has posted the questionnaire link on their website. In addition, we have contacted known researchers in the field and are in the process of contacting agencies who work with individuals with ID.

**Results**: Data collection is ongoing and a total of ten questionnaires have been collected to date. Preliminary descriptive results suggest that body parts, inappropriate physical contact, sexually transmitted infections, intercourse, and incest are priority items for respondents in terms of their perceived importance for topics in the assessment and sexual education of individuals with ID. In addition, issues of online sexuality, consent, same-sex intimacy, and environmental boundaries have been identified as requiring further emphasis or addition in a revised version of the SSKAAT-R.

**Discussion**: This research will aid in better assessing the sexual needs of this population and will therefore help in tailoring sex education programs for individuals with ID. Once these programs are individually adapted, they may increase the ability of individuals with ID to make informed decisions about their sexual relationships and sexual health. As a result, individuals with ID will be better equipped to consent to sexual relationships, to make informed choices with respect to birth control, and to reduce their vulnerability to sexual abuse.

**Correspondence:**

Katya Gessie, Laurentian University, [kgessie@laurentian.ca](mailto:kgessie@laurentian.ca)