

Underdiagnosis of Sexual Dysfunction in Asian American Women: A Call for Culturally Sensitive Advocacy in Urology

BACKGROUND

- Female sexual dysfunction (FSD) affects 40–50% of women in the United States, yet it remains consistently underdiagnosed across populations.
- FSD most commonly manifests as low sexual desire, arousal disorder, dyspareunia, and orgasmic disorder.
- Asian American women comprise 4.1% of the total U.S. population and 8% of U.S. women but are underrepresented in urologic and sexual health research.
- Cultural values strongly influence perceptions of sexuality; however, the intersection of these beliefs with clinical practice is relatively understudied.
- Sexual health remains a taboo topic in many Asian cultures, which can:
 - Discourage providers from initiating screening.
 - Prevent patients from voluntarily disclosing symptoms.
- This combination of underrepresentation and cultural stigma may contribute to delayed diagnosis and poorer quality-of-life outcomes.
- The Asian American community is highly diverse, yet current research often fails to disaggregate data by subgroup, obscuring meaningful differences and preventing culturally tailored care.
- We hypothesize that the true prevalence of FSD among Asian American women is higher than currently reported due to cultural and systemic barriers.

OBJECTIVES

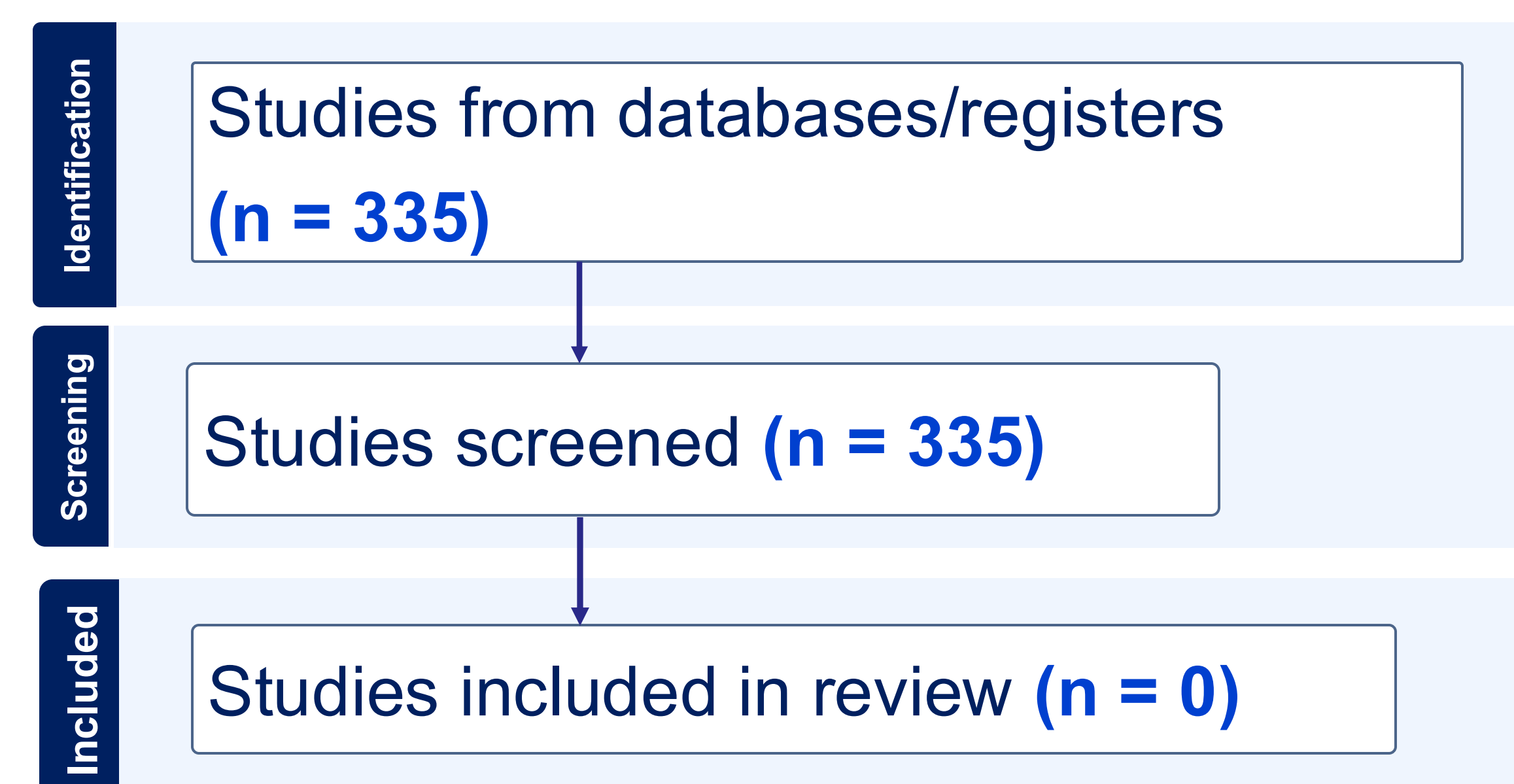
This project aims to:

- Review existing literature on sexual dysfunction diagnosis in Asian American women
- Identify gaps in current research and clinical practice that contribute to the underdiagnosis of female sexual dysfunction in Asian American women.
- Highlight advocacy strategies to promote culturally competent screening and equitable access to care.

METHODS

- Conducted a scoping review of PubMed for studies published 1990–2025.
- Search terms combined Asian subgroup identifiers (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Vietnamese) with sexual dysfunction terms (e.g., dyspareunia, arousal, orgasm, “low sexual desire,” “sexual pain”).
- Additional keywords captured barriers to care such as *underdiagnosis*, *stigma*, *health literacy*, and *provider-initiated screening*.
- Limited to studies conducted in the United States.
- Articles were screened by title, abstract, and full text for relevance.

RESULTS



- After title, abstract, and full-text screening, zero studies met the inclusion criteria.
- The most common reasons for excluding studies was that they focused on women in Asian countries rather than Asian Americans in the U.S.
- Existing literature failed to disaggregate Asian subgroups, often categorizing Asians under “Other.”
- No studies specifically examined female sexual dysfunction (FSD) in Asian American women.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Our proposal

- Launch a national survey through ResearchMatch.org to assess:
 - The true prevalence of sexual dysfunction in Asian American women.
 - Cultural and systemic barriers to screening, disclosure, and treatment.
- Collaborate with community organizations to promote sexual health awareness and work towards destigmatization.
- Partner with AUA and AUGS to start a social media awareness campaign.

Research and Data Advocacy

- Disaggregate Asian American data by subgroup (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Indian) in research and national datasets.
- Partner with community organizations to co-design studies that address stigma and encourage participation.
- Promote community-based participatory research to ensure research questions highlight the real-world needs of patients within this population.

Clinical Recommendations

- Incorporate sexual function screening questions into primary care visits to provide targeted urologic care.
- Advocate for interpretation services, multilingual patient navigators, and screening tools in several languages, and cultural tailored educational materials
- Develop provider training modules focused on culturally sensitive sexual health communication to empower providers to broach the subject.