

POSTER

**EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT AS A COMPENSATORY STRATEGY:
RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS IN WOMEN WITH SEXUAL
DYSFUNCTIONS RELATED TO MAYER-ROKITANSKY-KÜSTER-HAUSER
SYNDROME**

Hellen Vivianni Veloso Corrêa^{1*}, Juliana Schulze Burti², Lídia Silveira dos Santos¹

¹Federal University of Para, Belém, Brazil

²Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

[*hevyann@gmail.com](mailto:hevyann@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Maintenance relationship behaviors are understood as evolved psychological mechanisms shaped by natural selection to address adaptive challenges related to pair-bonding, cooperation, and long-term reproductive strategies. Initially focused on reproduction, these mechanisms evolved into neurophysiological responses that foster emotional closeness and relationship stability, offering an evolutionary explanation for the strong link between sexual satisfaction and relationship maintenance. However, in cases of sexual dysfunction associated with clinical conditions, individuals may adopt compensatory strategies—such as increased emotional investment—to sustain their relationships. This study examined how sexual functioning, sexual satisfaction, emotional attachment, and relationship satisfaction interact in women with Mayer-Rokitansky-Küster-Hauser Syndrome (MRKH), a congenital condition characterized by vaginal atresia/shortening and uterine hypoplasia or agenesis, often leading to genito-pelvic pain penetration disorder. Thirty-four Brazilian women with MRKH (Rokitansky Group – RG) and 80 women without the condition (Comparison Group – CG), aged 18–64 and in romantic relationships lasting more than six months, completed online surveys assessing sexual practices, sexual function, sexual satisfaction, emotional bonding, and relationship satisfaction. Results showed that among RG participants, relationship satisfaction was associated only with emotional attachment, whereas among CG participants, it was linked to both sexual satisfaction and emotional attachment. Despite higher reports of penetration-related pain among RG participants, no significant differences were found between groups in terms of sexual practices, function, or satisfaction. These findings support previous research suggesting that, in the context of sexual dysfunction, emotional attachment may function as a compensatory mechanism for preserving intimacy, relational quality, and long-term relationship stability.