Emotional experiences associated with late virginity: Qualitative findings from the multi-sources project *DiverJe*

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Being an adult virgin: **WHAT is the problem?**

**METHODS**

Interviews (n = 26 adult virgins, 42% women; Mage = 24).
Virtual spaces (n = 244, 51% women).
Total of 79 pages of transcripts (single spaced)
Team coding (n=3 coders) on 10% of all (randomly selected) material interrater
κ=80.33

**LATE VIRGINITY is often experienced as stigmatizing**

❖ “outcasted because of it”, “bummed out”, “teased”
❖ “embarrassed by [being] the odd one who can't relate to their [friends’ sex] stories”
❖ “called abnormal, undesirable, and told that [they] don’t know how to love or be loved.”
Adult virgins experience mixed emotions

**ANGER**

“It's really frustrating because I feel like I'm completely ill-equipped for the "adult" dating world.”

**SADNESS**

“I have moments of truly feeling unworthy” […]

“I believed then, as I do today, that I had crossed the point of no return. I missed the boat. Got to the train station too late.”

**SHAME and GUILT**

“I was "outed" as a virgin by a friend of mine at party once. The pain and shame that came from all the mockery that followed lives with me to this day.”

“[…] It's kind of shameful to have to tell that, say, that you're a virgin at 25.” As time goes by, I am feeling more and more guilty that I haven’t done anything.”
Adult virgins experience **mixed emotions**

Anger, sadness and shame  → loneliness, social withdrawal, lack of self-confidence  
  → virginity is unintentional

“A just haven't wanted it yet. But I don't want it to become an issue either. It's good, it makes me feel strong, and like, man, if I could be 28 and still a virgin, like, then I can do anything.”

**PRIDE**

Having social support  
knowing another adult virgin  
Being in *cognitive consonance* with their virginity
SO WHAT?

1) The virgin “label” is often stigmatizing
2) increase visibility of adult virginity → a form of sexual diversity

Thank you!
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