

Teenage boys take less responsibility for preventing the spread of chlamydia

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Teenage boys in Sweden take less responsibility than girls for preventing the spread of chlamydia and other sexually transmitted infections, according to a new study from the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

The study was published in the journal *Midwifery* and was carried out in primary care in the Västra Götaland region of Sweden.

"We have seen a major increase in the number of cases of [chlamydia](#) in Sweden over the last few years, and must find new ways of reaching out to boys with information if we are to reverse this trend," says midwife Gun Rembeck, one of the researchers behind the study.

The study involved almost 500 17-year-old high-school pupils in western Sweden attending classes on risks, sexual behaviour, responsibility, condoms and Swedish law in respect of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They were then invited to fill out a questionnaire anonymously.

"The most striking thing is that a very high proportion of the boys state that they will not be following the advice given during the classes, and that almost as many think that sex education has no impact whatsoever on their sexual behaviour," says Rembeck.

The responses also showed that more teenage [girls](#) had had sexual intercourse than boys, and that it was also more common for the girls to have been tested for STIs. While the boys had more experience of using

condoms than the girls, other studies have shown that the responsibility for the prevention of unwanted pregnancy is more important to girls than boys.

"Many young girls go to youth clinics at an early stage for contraception, and are also given information there on the importance of protecting themselves against infections," says Rembeck. "We need to use other methods to reach [boys](#) and perhaps develop our partnerships with other professional groups who work with young people."

The last decade has seen new cases of chlamydia in Sweden almost triple: in 2007 more than 47,000 people were diagnosed with chlamydia, compared with fewer than 14,000 in 1997. The infection is increasing primarily in females aged between 15 and 25. The increase is due to several factors, including more sexual partners, more casual sexual liaisons and reduced use of condoms.

Source: University of Gothenburg ([news](#) : [web](#))

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