

More about sex and relationships needed at gynecological visits

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Visits to a gynaecologist or midwife are generally associated with different tests and/or prescriptions for contraceptives, but could offer so much more. Women, doctors and midwives are agreed that gynaecological visits presents great opportunities for dialogue about sexual health, reveals a thesis from the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Many [young women](#) see sex as a problem, the thesis shows. Almost 500 women aged 23-29 answered questions about their sex lives, their relationships and how they view gynaecological visits. One in five had a reduced sex drive and found it difficult to be satisfied together with their partner. Just as many said that they had been taken advantage of sexually or experienced other forms of sexual abuse.

"Many young women actually know little about their sexuality," says midwife Eva Wendt, who wrote the thesis. "If you feel confident about your body and understand how it works, sex is much easier and much more fun."

Nine out of ten young women think it natural to be asked questions about sexuality at a visit to a [gynaecologist](#) or midwife, the survey shows. Seven out of ten think it natural to be asked questions about sexual abuse.

"Women trust their doctor and their midwife - they are independent parties who have both expertise and a duty of confidentiality," says

Wendt. "This paves the way for a dialogue when these professionals ask questions and can help women to reflect and see their own situation more clearly."

This view is shared by [midwives](#), general practitioners and gynaecologists, but it is still relatively unusual for medical professionals to invite women to engage in in-depth discussion of sexuality and relationships. Instead, visits are primarily medically-oriented - discussion of sexuality gets forgotten or time runs out.

"Both doctors and midwives describe opportunities to create respectful meetings and strengthen women by giving them information and encouraging them to have a positive view of sexuality," says Wendt. "Now that we know that women and medical professionals both want the same thing, perhaps sexuality and dialogue with the patient can be allotted more time at gynaecological visits."

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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