

Women with a high economic status claim to have better sex

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An analysis based on the first Spanish National Sexual Health Survey, carried out in 2009, confirms that socioeconomic factors affect sexual satisfaction. People with a lower economic status claim to be less sexually satisfied, particularly women.

Investigators at the Barcelona Public Health Agency (ASPB) have analysed the influence of various [socioeconomic factors](#) on the results of the first Spanish National Sexual Health Survey, carried out in 2009 by the Centre for Sociological Research.

This survey, for which 9,850 interviews were carried out, showed that approximately 90% of men and women claimed to be very satisfied or quite satisfied with their sex life in general, and that 95% were satisfied with the [sexual relations](#) they had had during the previous year.

Furthermore, Spanish people claimed to be more satisfied with sexual relations they had with a stable partner (97% of men and 96% of women) than with a casual partner (88% of men and 80% of women).

With the new study, the experts confirmed that socioeconomic factors affect [sexual satisfaction](#). "People of a lower socioeconomic status claim to be less satisfied sexually, which especially applies to women, who seem to be more influenced by these factors," explains Dolores Ruiz, the main author of the study, to SINC.

In terms of safe sexual relations, 77% of women and 73% of men

claimed to have used contraception habitually with a stable partner during the last year, whereas in the case of sexual relations with a casual partner these percentages rose to 92% for women and 86% for men.

In this case, socioeconomic factors influence men as much as women, even at the different times analysed and with the different types of partner. "Those people with a lower socioeconomic status are always those who use less contraception," Ruiz points out.

In relation to experiences of sexual abuse, more than 4% of men and 6.5% of women claimed to have had some kind of sexual relation against their will during their life, and 1.6% of men and 6.1% of women claimed to have been sexually abused or raped at some time in their life.

"Once again, it's particularly women of a lower socioeconomic status who suffer more experiences of sexual abuse. It's important to bear in mind that these women also might have more problems when it comes to contacting the various organisations that can provide help for them," the ASPB researcher points out.

Higher social status, more satisfaction

Although the data already suggested that the state of sexual health of the young adult population in Spain is generally quite good, the authors found socioeconomic and gender inequalities in practically all of the aspects studied.

"People that have a more disadvantaged socioeconomic status tend to have less satisfying and less safe sexual relations, as well as suffering more experiences of sexual abuse. Furthermore, [women](#) usually suffer more experiences of [sexual abuse](#) than men and they claim to have less sexual gratification during their first sexual intercourse," she states.

However, people with a higher [socioeconomic status](#) seem to have a better awareness of their own needs and a greater capacity for developing their sexuality in a way which is satisfying for them, as well as having greater control over the use of contraception.

"There is a need to introduce public policies which aim to reduce socioeconomic and gender inequalities that we have found in sexual satisfaction, in the use of contraceptives and in abusive sexual relations within the Spanish population," Ruiz concludes.

The complexity of sexual health

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), [sexual health](#) "is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence".

More information: Dolores Ruiz-Muñoz, Kaye Wellings, Esther Castellanos-Torres, Carlos Álvarez-Dardet, Mariona Casals-Cases, Gloria Pérez. "Sexual health and socioeconomic-related factors in Spain". *Annals of Epidemiology* 23 (2013) 620e628

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