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Do women still visit an Ob/Gyn in their post-reproductive years?

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The proportion of women ages 45-64 who rely solely on an obstetrician/gynecologist for their primary care needs is declining, although about 10-20% of the nearly 45,000 women who took part in a recent study still do. A significant number of the women see only a family physician or internist, or visit both an ob/gyn and a generalist, which raises issues of overlap in care and cost effectiveness, as discussed in an article in *Journal of Women's Health*.

The article, titled "Office Visits for Women Aged 45-64 Years According to Physician Specialties, reports that the percentage of women in their post-reproductive years who only went to a family or internal medicine physician increased from 62% to 72% between 2002 and 2012. Melanie Raffoul, MD and coauthors from the American Academy of Family Physicians, Center for Policy Studies (Washington, DC) and University of New Mexico School of Medicine (Albuquerque) found that racial and ethnic minority women, and those living in poverty, with public or no insurance, and from rural or non-urban areas, were significantly more likely to obtain their healthcare from a family physician.

"While many women rely on an ob/gyn for their healthcare, a large number of women in this age-group see only a generalist, according to these findings.. It is important that a woman's primary care provider be trained to deliver comprehensive care," says Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health,

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Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health.

More information: Melanie C. Raffoul et al. Office Visits for Women Aged 45–64 Years According to Physician Specialties, *Journal of Women's Health* (2016). DOI: 10.1089/jwh.2015.5599

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