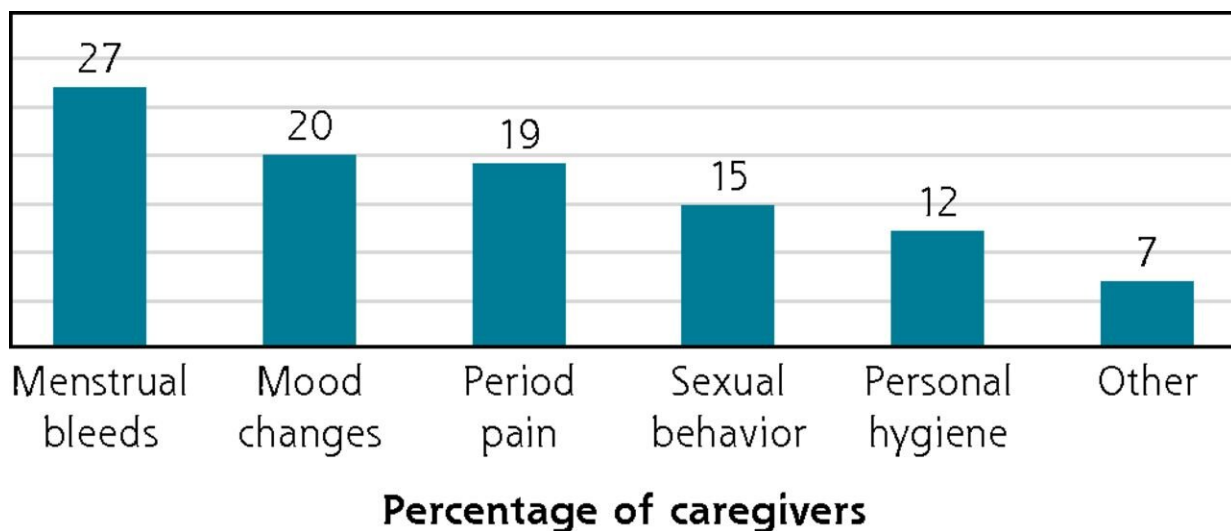


Researchers identify gynecological concerns of caregivers of young girls and women with Down syndrome

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Caregiver concerns about menstrual cycles. Credit: *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2023). DOI: 10.1370/afm.2993

Brazilian researchers conducted a cross-sectional study to explore the concerns of caregivers of Brazilian girls with Down syndrome (DS) regarding gynecological aspects of DS including menstruation, contraception and sexual practices. The study included 100 caregivers of females aged 9 years or older with DS who had reached menarche. Participating caregivers completed a questionnaire about their concerns

around puberty, menstruation, sexuality and contraceptive methods.

Caregivers commonly expressed concerns around menstrual bleeding. Most caregivers (57%) reported that they would permit their child to engage in [romantic relationships](#), including [sexual relationships](#), with 2% of caregivers surveyed reported that their child had already engaged in sexual intercourse.

According to information from surveyed caregivers, 14 of 78 (17.9%) individuals had used contraceptive methods, with weight gain being the most common side effect (43%). In the study sample, researchers concluded that women with DS had sexual development comparable to women without DS. These women are increasingly independent, which the authors argue makes it necessary to guide caregivers and [primary care physicians](#) on addressing difficulties related to menstruation, contraception and [sexual practices](#).

Women with Down syndrome (DS) and their caregivers may have more difficulties with puberty, menstruation, sexuality and contraception use. In this study, Brazilian researchers aimed to understand the concerns of the caregivers of girls and women with DS-related gynecological issues.

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the specific gynecological care requirements of young girls and women with DS and sheds light on the primary concerns expressed by their caregivers. These results can contribute to a deeper understanding of the unique needs of individuals with DS and serve as a means to sensitize physicians, regardless of their specialization, who may encounter patients with DS and require guidance in effectively addressing their families' inquiries and concerns.

The study is published in *The Annals of Family Medicine* journal.

More information: Gustavo Wandresen et al, Concerns Regarding Gynecological Aspects of Brazilian Girls and Women With Down Syndrome: A Cross-Sectional Study of Caregivers' Opinions, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1370/afm.2993](https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.2993)

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