Youth Sexuality

Repeat Survey
The outlook of 14 to 25-year-olds

2015
Youth Sexuality
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The outlook of 14–25-year-olds

A report of the findings

Results of the current representative survey

Citation method:
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1 Introductory remarks

Since as far back as 1980, the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung (BZgA) has been investigating the attitudes and behaviours of young people in the Federal Republic of Germany in respect of sexual education, sexuality and contraception. Youth sexuality 2014/15 is the eighth study in this ongoing series. The goal of the survey was to obtain empirical data, which, because of the representative nature of the samples, would allow reliable statements to be made about the attitudes and behaviours of young people in the Federal Republic of Germany, and – for young people of German background – of their parents, with regard to sexuality education.

The current study follows on from previous studies with the express goal of revealing trends among young people. However, it does more than just continue to describe trends: it also differs with respect to its altered sample. This was the first time that young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 were included in the study. The extension of the age span allows the BZgA to pursue the developments as the subjects transition from being minors to young adults; there is no resilient data on this age group in the previous studies.

Further, additional minor methodological modifications and more information about the methodology of the investigation and evaluation concept can be found in the chapter 'Methodological Concept' at the end of the report. TNS Emnid, Bielefeld, was responsible for obtaining and evaluating the data.

The report at hand presents the results from the survey of 14–25-year-olds. It summarizes the most important results of the survey; the data is presented both in text form and diagrammatically.
2 Central findings

The Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung has been examining the attitudes and behaviours of young people with regard to sexuality education, sexuality and contraception since 1980: ‘Youth Sexuality 2014/15’ is the eighth study in this trend series. This time, 3,568 young people between the ages of 14 and 17 were surveyed; 1,056 of them were girls and boys from a family with a migrant background. The survey consisted of a combination of a personal oral interview and a questionnaire filled in by the participants themselves. The survey period ran from April to August 2014. A new feature of the current study is that young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 were also included for the first time. (In this English translation, therefore, the term ‘young people’ as previously employed for 14–17-year-olds has been abandoned in the interests of clarity. The members of the younger age group are referred to throughout as ‘adolescents’ and the terms ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ are also restricted to this age group; the 18–25-year-olds are referred to as ‘young adults’ (or ‘young men’ or ‘young women’ as the case may be). Here are the results at a glance:

Sex education in the home: still relevant...

Mothers have always played a key role in providing parental sex education, particularly for girls with a German background. The expansion of the sample size reveals that mothers maintain their significance as a confidante for their daughters long into adulthood, remaining one of the preferred reference people when questions about sexuality and contraception arise. With regard to sons, increased participation on the part of their fathers has been observed for some time now: this is the first time fathers and mothers have been recorded as equally significant in providing sexuality education to their sons.

...but no longer the only source

The parental role is becoming increasingly less important; or rather, it is replaced more than before by peers and – particularly for male adolescents – professional sexuality education in school.

Parents less active in migrant families

Adolescents with a migrant background, particularly boys, get a lot less support in the home than young people with a German background with regard to sexuality education. This was shown by the question about whether the parents played an important role in their sex education. Parents in migrant families are also less likely to be confidants for sexual questions. For boys with a migrant back

ground, the girlfriend is an extremely important source of information. Of all the conceivable reference people, the girlfriend is the one they hope will help them fill any knowledge gaps they feel they have.

Contraceptive advice in German families on the decline

The long-term trend reveals 2005 to have been the year of the highest figures – 70% of (German) girls and 60% of (German) boys stated at that time they had been advised about contraception by their parents; however this year was a turning point, because the slight downward trend in 2009 has become more marked in the current 2014 survey. Parental contraceptive advice is no longer as common as it was during periods of maximum figures ten, fifteen years ago. 63/51% of girls/boys are currently advised by their parents about contraception. In both cases that is about 10 percentage points less than the maximum.

Adolescents with a migrant background have far lower figures when it comes to parental advice about contraception: girls: 41%, boys: 36%. In addition, more than twice as many girls with a migrant background who received such advice were not satisfied with the advice they got, compared to German young people (11% v. 5%). Parental advice was more common among the adolescents who had already had sexual experience. However, the differences between German adolescents and those with a migrant background remain.

Parents are less set on just a single method in their recommendations

It is more and more common for condoms and the contraceptive pill to be recommended together – for girls and for boys; this trend has continued in the current study. However, there is still a gender-specific slant, since more than 90% of boys are (also) recommended condoms as a contraceptive solution (pill: 60%), while the pill is the clear frontrunner for girls at 87% (condoms: 69%).

Altered media preferences: the internet on the up

The slight decline in parental significance in matters of sex education is probably connected to young people using media differently these days. The significance of the internet as a medium of sex education for young people has rapidly increased since the turn of the millennium. In 2005 and 2009 it was particularly male adolescents who informed themselves via this source (around twice as many boys and girls cited the internet as a significant source of their sex education), but girls are now catching up. In the current survey, the
gender gap has reduced to 8 percentage points, despite another strong increase among the boys of 17 percentage points (boys: 47%, girls: 39%).

The internet has not wholly replaced other sources, but they are becoming increasingly less important. The biggest knock was suffered by youth magazines, which used to hold a dominant position among the media sources. Among the male adolescents the internet has actually overtaken print media in its significance. The spectrum of informative sources within the internet is used differently by the sexes. Among the girls/women, around one in two has acquired information from Wikipedia and similar reference works, from sex education/advice pages, and interactively from internet forums. Among the boys/men around one in two has found information on Wikipedia and other encyclopaedias. But an equal number stated that sex films had given them important information. Far fewer looked at sites explicitly aimed at sex education and advice (boys/men: 34%, girls/women: 50%).

Increasingly important, particularly for male adolescents: school as a source of information

In eastern Germany (i.e. the states that formerly comprised the GDR), schools have finally managed to catch up with western schools with regard to sexuality education: access to sex education at school is now universal in Germany and almost independent of gender and background (i.e. German or migrant background). More than 90% of adolescents with a migrant background confirmed they had discussed sex education topics in class. More than 80% of young people said that their knowledge about sexuality, reproduction and contraception (among other things) came from school – no other source of sexuality education was cited more often. Teachers have become the most important people in boys’ sex education. More German boys than ever before listed them among their most important reference people for sex-education matters, i.e. teachers have for the first time overtaken mothers, who five years ago were still almost similarly important (45/38%). For boys with a migrant background school was the most important place of sex education. Around four in five young people confirm they addressed the topic of contraception.

Teachers are also the most important source of information in a professional context for topics where boys, regardless of their background, felt they had knowledge gaps.

The girlfriend – a sought-after source of knowledge

If boys and girls have a girlfriend/boyfriend, these latter are the primary confidants. For young adults aged 18 and up, the partner is even more likely to be the first port of call for confidential sexual questions than for adolescents (i.e. the under-18s) since they are more likely to be in a steady relationship (as more than half of young adults are). At the same time parents become less significant, but not at the same rate with which the partner-relationship increases in importance. Particularly among the young women of German background, for whom the mother played a significant role in their sex education, she maintains her great significance until far into her daughter’s 20s. It is also remarkable that there is not simply a switch between confidants with increasing age; instead, their overall number increases.

Young people’s self-assessment: generally well informed, some details have deficits

The majority of 14–17-year-olds today consider themselves sufficiently well informed on sexual matters, despite a decline in parental sex education. The current survey found that 85% of German girls and 83% of German boys felt this way – the highest figures measured to date; however, when looking at long-term trends, we see a remarkable consistency among the girls, because even in 1980 79% considered themselves well informed in this area. The equality between the sexes is relatively new however. Prior to 2009 the boys never quite reached the girls’ levels. Girls/boys with a migrant background do not consider themselves adequately sex-educated to the same extent (75%/77%). This group are more uncertain about how to evaluate their level of knowledge.

For all the topics about which questions were asked in the 1980 survey and which can be compared with today’s figures, the percentages of German girls and boys who do not feel sufficiently informed and who would like to know more about these individual topics have decreased substantially. The only exception here is the subject ‘pregnancy and childbirth’, a classic that never seems to decrease in importance: girls today are as likely as girls in 1980 to say they want to know more about this (36%/35%). It is pleasing that the subject of contraception stands out positively, because the percentage of girls and boys who say they are not sufficiently informed in this area has almost halved from 50% and 46% respectively.

Nevertheless, work still remains to be done: contraception is still in the top six of the 17 topics about which young people say, they do not yet feel adequately informed. Every third girl and every fourth boy between the ages of 14 and 17 has questions about this important topic (32%/25%). The figure is 40% among girls with a migrant background.
Young people today still have a need for information in other areas too. At least three in ten would like to know more about sexually transmitted infections and sexual practices. Among the female respondents interest in the subjects of pregnancy/childbirth, terminations and sexual violence reached similar proportions. Girls are generally hungrier for knowledge than boys. Among the girls, those from non-German homes are generally less confident than other adolescents and report an overall greater level of interest in more information.

**Having a first gynaecological consultation: the norm among the sexually active**

School is not as important for girls as it is for boys because they have an additional source of information available to them that boys cannot make use of: doctors. For three in ten girls, doctors are the preferred source of information for unanswered questions. The older they are, the more important doctors’ expertise is to them: among 17-year-olds, doctors were cited the most often as the group they would want to learn more from.

The majority of girls/young women have a gynaecological consultation for the first time between 14 and 17. More than 90% of German 17-year-old girls confirm they have been for such a consultation, a percentage non-German girls only reach by age 19. The differences have to do with the different extent of sexual activities. If girls (with or without a migrant background) have had sexual experience, they have very likely been for a gynaecological consultation (both way above 90%).

Among the German 14–15-year-old girls, 17% had a gynaecological consultation for the first time because of the HPV (human papilloma virus) vaccination or a consultation about it. The HPV vaccination is only an issue for 10% of non-German girls of the same age. The older girls, doctors are the preferred source of information (both way above 90%).

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Among the sexually experienced girls, the clear reason they made an appointment for a first gynaecological consultation was contraception. However, even among those without any sexual experience, contraception was a (contributing) reason to seek such a consultation. German girls under the age of 18 were particularly interested in this subject (23%; girls of non-German background: 15%).

When asked directly whether they had already sought advice about contraception from a doctor, an average of 81% of the girls/young women who had already had sexual intercourse said yes. For the 14–17-year-old German girls who had already been advised about contraception by a doctor, the current highest value of 2009 has largely been maintained.

**Advice centres – a small but important component in sexuality education**

The expertise of these institutions is definitely recognized by adolescents: 24%/20% of girls (with/without migrant background) and 13%/16% of boys list them among those sources they would ‘most like to’ receive information from about the topics where they feel they still lack knowledge. In reality, advice centres only play a small role, and a role that is currently in decline: 7% of all young people between the ages of 14 and 25 have been to an advice centre to get information about contraception. Even though this is not a large percentage, and the visit took place as part of a school event for a good half of those 7%, there are indicators suggesting that advice centres are an important source for certain groups who do not necessarily get a lot of information elsewhere. A small percentage of girls/young women that have never had a gynaecological consultation have been to an advice centre (around 5%). And 17% of the visitors said their motivation was to get information before having sexual intercourse for the first time.

**Girls and boys have different attitudes towards their bodies**

There are significant differences in how girls and boys feel about their own bodies. The great majority of boys/young men are quite happy about their physical appearance. Only one in five finds fault with it. Girls/young women find it much harder to accept their bodies the way they are. A quarter of the 14–17-year-old girls feel ‘too fat’, while only very few feel ‘too thin’. The norm of the ‘perfect figure’ seems to become more important with increasing age: among the 18–25-year-old women, 30% consider themselves ‘too fat’. However, it is still only a minority of young people who would consider dramatic action in the form of surgical procedures to improve their appearance; there has been no increase here in the past ten years.

**First contact to the opposite sex occurs between 14 and 17**

It is between the ages of 14 and 17 that sexual contacts to the opposite sex first occur. By 17, around 90% have kissed another person and at least two thirds have experience with petting. It is only girls from migrant families (across all age groups) who exhibit more restraint.

**Sexual activity – a tendency to start later**

Even though (hetero)sexual activity during adolescence has increased over the decades, there is no uninterrupted development towards more and more sexually experienced young adolescents (Germans); instead, there seems to have been a slight decrease in recent years. Among the 14, 16 and 17-year-olds the
percentages of sexually active respondents were lower than for the last survey five years ago. With one exception, the 15-year-olds, they stagnated at a similar level to 2009. The number of sexually active 14-year-olds (of German background), which was temporarily in double figures between 1998 and 2005 (between 10% and 12%), has dropped to single digits again (currently 6%/3%). The biggest drop for the girls is in the group of 16-year-olds (minus 5 percentage points compared to 2009). Among the boys it is the 17-year-olds with a drop of 7 percentage points (among the girls there was already a substantial decrease in this age group in 2009). That means there is an increased gap between 17-year-old boys and girls once again: the convergence observed in the past is not continuing.

The expansion of the age bracket surveyed allows us to make statements about the sexual behaviour of young adults for the first time. Among 19-year-old German women, 90% have had sexual intercourse. The young German men only reach the equivalent percentage two years later at 21. Young men of non-German background only lag slightly behind (85%) at 21. Only around two thirds of young women with foreign roots have become sexually active by this age (70%).

The majority of 18–25-year-olds with sexual experience are regularly sexually active, but there is a sizeable percentage among them for whom this is not the case (36% 'only sometimes/occasionally', 7% 'never'). Being in a steady relationship is crucial for regular sexual intercourse.

The respondents aged 16 and up were asked if they had a sexual preference for their own gender or the opposite sex (or both). 4% of the male and 2% of the female respondents between the ages of 16 and 25 explicitly confirm a preference for the same sex. The group of young people with a bisexual orientation is similarly sized, but with the opposite gender distribution: here the number of girls/women outnumber the boys/men (5%/2%).

**Different behavioural patterns for sexual contacts among girls and boys with a migrant background**

Boys from migrant families are sexually active sooner and therefore overall slightly more often than their German counterparts (32%/28%). However, that is only true for the early teenage years. From age 17 onwards the number of sexually experienced boys with a migrant background falls slightly behind that of the German boys/young men. Among the girls/women, those with a migrant background substantially lag behind their German counterparts (24%/34%). The latter group maintain their head start until long into their 20s. It is primarily young Islamic women in general and those with Turkish citizenship specifically who are less likely than anybody else to engage in sexual activity during adolescence and if they do, they do it late.

**Different reasons for abstaining from sexual contacts**

Kissing and some physical contact is okay, but sexual intercourse is not: a major reason for all young people/young adults here is the absence of the right partner. 55% and more state as much. The other reasons differ depending on gender and background.

Girls/young women with a migrant background cite being ‘too young’ for sexual contacts for much longer – into adulthood. And the fear that ‘the parents could find out’ (and not welcome it) influences the behaviour of some of the young women with a migrant background (20%), even after they come of age. The fear of a negative reaction by the parents is hardly a reason for young German girls. Even among the girls under the age of 18, only 9% cite this reason; the 14 and 15-year-old girls being the most likely to do so.

Moral reasons play a big role for girls/young women of non-German background: they often reject in-depth sexual contacts with the argument that ‘it is not right before marriage’ (28%; girls/young women of German background: 4%). Particularly for the young adult women this is the main reason why they shy away from sexual activity, even though they are of age.

By the way, this is also true for the young men with a migrant background from age 18, although not to the same extent (17%). This attitude is particularly widespread among young people of Muslim faith.

For boys/youth men, the step from genital petting to (the first) sexual intercourse fails in a quarter of cases because the partner declines.

**The first time – now less likely to be unplanned than a decade ago**

The trend among German boys towards a more and more unplanned start to a sexually active life, which was seen from the mid-90s onwards (maximum value for the answer ‘was completely unexpected’ 2005: 37%), was broken in 2009 and the new, very much lower level is confirmed with the current figure of 18%. The percentage of German girls (15%) for whom their first sexual intercourse came as a complete surprise also fell. There is now a great correlation between the descriptions of the situation given by the boys and the girls.

The percentage of young people who are specifically planning their first sexual intercourse is gradually going up again. However, the first time as a properly planned event is still less common than it was in 1980.
One trend is also that more and more boys from German families are experiencing their first time with a steady girlfriend. A new maximum value has been recorded here at 60% (only 41% in 1980). And they emphasize the mutual consent more than they used to.

The level of familiarity with the partner has also become more important to the German girls: after a long period of quite stable figures, (even) more girls are now experiencing their first time in a steady relationship. Now at 73%, the girls’ percentage is 9 percentage points higher than it was in 2005 and 2009 and also higher than it was for the first survey in 1980 (61%). As a result there is a trend (however, the change is not statistically verified) where more young people now than in the past are saying they have only had sexual encounters with one partner to date. A new maximum figure has been reached for German boys here (43%).

Young adults between 18 and 25 largely have had experiences with at least three partners. The experiences with different sexual partners increase particularly between the ages of 21 and 25.

Sexual fidelity within a relationship however is of great importance to them. Hardly any of them consider the demand for sexual fidelity to be wrong (3%/4%) and the majority of young women declare sexual fidelity as a definite necessity (80%; young men: 67%; they are more likely to say sexual fidelity is ‘desirable’).

Experience of sexual violence not an isolated incident for girls/young women

A shockingly high number of girls/young women – one in five between the ages of 14 and 25 – have already had to fend off unwanted sexual overtures at least once, some even several times. The risk of sexual assaults increases when the girls/women in question are already sexually active; in this case it is almost one in four.

When comparing the figures over time, the number of 14–17-year-old German girls that have been exposed to unwanted sexual behaviour has decreased somewhat (currently 11%; 1998, first time asked: 16%). However, there is also a negative trend insofar as the unwanted activities lead to sexual intercourse more often than in previous years (current figure: 26%; 2005 and 2001: both 14%). 58% of the affected 14–17-year-olds report that they managed to fend off the unwanted sexual approaches.

Shocking: the small group of girls/women who hardly knew their first sexual partner or who did not know him at all are particularly likely to report sexual pressure: 42% of German girls/women and 53% of non-German girls/women said as much. In addition this group are particularly likely to have experienced multiple events.

How quickly (and if at all) young people can entrust somebody with this information and tell them about it depends greatly on how the situation ended. Among the girls/women who were forced into sexual intercourse against their will, one in four took years to do so and more than a third had never spoken to anyone about it (35%).

It is only individual boys/young men who report sexual violence (4%); however, those of a homosexual orientation seem to be affected to roughly the same extent as the girls/young women.

Contraception the first time: positive trends among male 14–17

After years during which the percentage of young people not using contraception was in double figures – still 15% in 2005 and even 29% in 1980, the first survey – it is a positive finding that a percentage of under 10% has lastingly been achieved for the German boys (currently: 6%). This has already been the case for a long time among the girls: currently at 8%, the percentage of girls not using contraception is as low as it was five years ago and far removed from the result of the first survey (1980: 20%).

The second pleasing result in the trend observation is that young people with a migrant background are now more conscientious about contraception. In 2005 and 2009 there was already a marked decline in those not using it, and this development has continued from 2009 to 2014 (percentage among girls/boys: 2%/10%). Among the entire age spectrum of 14–25-year-olds, the percentage of with a migrant background that do not use contraception is still higher than among their German peers (female/male: 9%/13% compared to 6%/9%).

Among those who had sexual experiences very early on (14 and younger), contraceptive use was less good than average when they first had intercourse. It is a similar story for young people who first had intercourse at age 18 or later (exception: young German women, who are most likely to use contraception at any age).

The reasons for not using contraception are still the same: the element of surprise ‘it happened too spontaneously’, coupled with a lot of naïve hope ‘I thought nothing would happen’. A first sexual encounter under the influence of alcohol/drugs is particularly likely to occur in spontaneous sexual relationships (if the sexual partner was not well known: almost 30% cited this as a reason for not using contraception).
The percentage of young people not using contraception for the second time is lower than for the first time. Among the sexually active Germans it is 2%/5%, among those with a migrant background it is 5%/8%. Those are approximately the figures we got when we asked about their most recent sexual intercourse prior to the survey.

**Condoms are the unchallenged contraceptive of choice for the first time**

Condoms still hold a clear lead ahead of all contraceptive alternatives in 2014: condoms were used for the first time in around three in four cases (average: 73%). The figure of the 14–17-year-olds in 2014 is 75%.

The pill is also used in a surprisingly high percentage of first sexual encounters, in half of the cases on average. However, this is more true for the behaviour of the German adolescents /young adults (a good third for those of non-German background). And: the older the young people are when they first have intercourse, and the more familiar they are with their partner, the more likely they are to already use the contraceptive pill for their first time. The pill is increasingly being used as a supplement instead of as an alternative, across the entire age spectrum. The majority of girls/women on the pill also used condoms when they became sexually active for the first time; this indicates that in addition to preventing a pregnancy the respondents also wish to avoid HIV.

**A switch from condoms to the pill with increasing experience**

Condoms are still the most commonly used contraceptive for the second time too; however, the pill is used more often. One reason for this is that the strategy of using both condoms and the pill is particularly common the second time. With increasing experience, condom use decreases. It is increasingly replaced by the pill. There is a reversal in figures for the first/most recent sexual intercourse: condoms were used 70% and more for the first time, while the pill was used that much during the most recent sexual intercourse.

This trend is true for both sexes; however, boys/young men stick with condoms longer than their female peers. Condoms are also more relevant for those who are not in a steady relationship.

**Hormonal contraception: not just the traditional contraceptive pill**

Among the young women, one in ten has already experimented with other forms of hormonal contraceptives besides the pill. That makes this form of contraception more significant than diaphragms, the IUD and the chemical contraceptives that were once common.

An overall high level of awareness of the necessity for contraception

The 14–17-year-olds were more likely than the young adults to say that they ‘always paid very close attention’ to preventing pregnancy, although girls have always been, and still are, more conscientious about contraception than boys. 71% of the female and 52% of the male 14–25-year-olds picked this highest category of the set five categories given. Both sexes exhibit a sense of responsibility: 60% of the boys/men and 54% of the girls/women who were currently in a steady relationship said ‘we are both responsible for contraception’. When young people start being sexually active, the boys feel very much more co-responsible; with increasing experience – in line with the switch to the pill as the sole contraceptive – there is a greater shift of responsibility to the female partner.

Among the 18–25-year-olds the main reason for choosing the most recent contraceptive was efficacy, regardless of whether they picked the pill and/or condoms. The under-18s were not asked this question because of their overall lesser experience.

**Communication about contraception: a matter of course**

It is positive that partners in heterosexual relationship almost always communicate about contraception. This is true for 90% of the sexually experienced boys/youth men and 94% of the girls/youth women. And even if no sexual activity has taken place yet, more than 70% have already addressed the contraceptive question. Even though the relationships of the adolescents have on average existed for less time than those of the young adults, more than 90% of the 14–17-year-olds with experience of sexual intercourse confirm they have spoken about contraception.

Young people do not yet take it quite so for granted to talk with the partner about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and the potentially necessary precautions. Around two thirds of the young German men aged 18+ and three quarters of the young women said they had talked with their partner about HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The percentages from the young adults with a migrant background are slightly lower.

**The main contraceptives, condoms and the pill, are generally well accepted but problems are not unknown**

Almost every sexually active person in this study has already used condoms at least once and at least 90% of the German respondents said the same about the pill (with a migrant background: around 80%). Both methods of contraception are evaluated very positively in all their facets. Two exceptions: (a) what the
boys/young men said about how condoms affect sex: this aspect only reaches an average value of 3.5 on the scale of 1 (best value) to 6 (worst value); (b) what the 18–25-year-old female respondents said about the cost of the contraceptive pill: the average value here was 3.2. Those under the age of 18 felt differently. For them the contraceptive pill is free, which 84%/90% of the sexually active girls (with/without a migrant background) knew. In the German girls’ assessment (the comparison is only possible for them), the agreeableness of the pill with regard to health has improved. It has made a major leap forward in the assessment over the past 18 years from 3.1 to 2.1.

However, the great majority of respondents are not unfamiliar with practical problems. Around one third of the boys/young men have had a burst or torn condom and a similar number had problems putting it on. The clear main problem with the pill is the necessity of having to take it regularly. Two thirds of the female respondents who take the pill have forgotten at least once to take it on time; at least one third have forgotten to take the pill with them when spending the night elsewhere. In addition, three in ten pill users said they had some uncertainty about the pill’s efficacy as a result of vomiting or diarrhoea, and they reported interim bleeding.

The ‘morning-after pill’ now better known among adolescents who are not yet sexually active

What if contraception was not used? Almost all the girls knew about the possibility of emergency contraception by way of the morning-after pill; 97% and more know about it in the group for whom this information is particularly important: the sexually active girls and young women (regardless of migrant background). 86% of German girls/young women confirm they know about the ‘morning-after pill’ even when they are not yet sexually active. This percentage is slightly lower at 76% for the girls/young women with a migrant background.

13% of the 14–17-year-old girls who have had sexual intercourse several times have already been in a situation where they have had to take the morning after pill; a smaller percentage (3%) have had to take it more than once. Among the 18–25-year-olds the percentages are twice as high (overall 25%, 7% more than once). Between 2001 and 2014 the figures have remained relatively stable for the German girls.

If the morning-after pill was used, then generally speaking because there was a problem with the actual contraceptive used: in almost half the cases the condom came off during intercourse or it tore (44%). There were more ‘yes’ responses to the two answer categories relating to the pill: more than one in three female respondents had forgotten to take the regular contraceptive pill, while around half that number had feared for its efficacy because of vomiting or diarrhoea. For almost one in two of the female respondents the situation was difficult because the prescription had to be issued at the weekend. A similar number were scared they would get pregnant anyway, and around four in ten were worried because of the side effects (39%). By no means all of them knew the general procedure for how to get the morning-after pill, particularly among the affected 14–17-year-olds: they were significantly less likely than the 18–25-year-olds to know that there was the option of emergency contraception (10%) and what they had to do to get the morning-after pill (19%). The weekend issue was more of a problem for the women aged 18+ and those with a higher level of education.

**A desire to have children? Yes, definitely, but later**

Young people between the ages of 14 and 25 say children form part of their life plans: only a small minority (10%) are explicitly against having their own children. The percentage of those who say children are not in their life plan appears to be very stable from a young age; girls settle on an attitude towards children early on, while boys take longer to determine their opinion.

It would be ideal to have two children; more than half of the 18–25-year-olds agree on that. But only after finishing their education and obtaining some experience in the workforce. That is the consensus for more than two thirds of the young women and men.

A pregnancy right now would be akin to a disaster for three quarters of the 14-year-olds; this is even more the case for girls with a non-German background. At age 18 and 19 more than half of the young women still describe a potential pregnancy as a disaster. It is only from age 20 onwards that this attitude steadily disappears.

It is only in the 21–25 age bracket that there are an appreciable number of young women and men who have had a child or are about to have one (9%). Early motherhood is still taken more for granted by young women from eastern Germany today, 25 years after reunification. (Have already had a child/ currently pregnant – east:19%; west: 4%).
3 Sexuality education and advice

Sexuality education takes place in many ways. Asked quite generally where they mostly get their knowledge about sexuality, reproduction, contraception etc. from, adolescents today are most likely to cite school as their source. The digital world of the internet was still unknown in 1980 when the first Youth Sexuality study was conducted. However in recent years it has become increasingly relevant and has become an important source of information (cf. ch. 8.1) that is very much competing with the traditionally popular medium of youth magazines. The internet has already overtaken print media in its significance for the boys.

An entire chapter is devoted to the media of sexuality education. However, the following section will focus on the people involved in sex education. Even though the digital media have seen a great increase in significance, they have not yet been able to replace one thing: interpersonal communication in the form of personal conversations. Two thirds of young people between the ages of 14 and 17 have received information about sexuality and contraception in this way (among others).

The adolescents are the focal point for the sexuality education chapter, since the memories of their sex education are still 'fresh'. Only a few questions central for the evaluation were aimed at the whole spectrum from 14–25. The responses from the young adults are addressed separately in the relevant locations in the text.

3.1 Professionals involved in education and advice
3.1.1 Reference people in sexuality education

The most important people for the sex education of 14–17-year-olds are people from their everyday environment: the mother and father and a teacher, while among the peers it is the best friend. There are clear gender differences regarding the significance of these people, as even a glance at the different lines on the graph on the following page reveals.

**Girls/boys.** The most striking aspect is the differing significance given to the mother and father. While the primary reference person for girls is their mother, the father only playing a secondary role, the father and mother are equally significant for boys’ sexuality education. The mother only becomes more important for boys if the father is absent as a reference person or is not available in their everyday lives: if the boys live with their single mother, 44% say their mother is the most important person, while only 18% say that about their father.

The overall strong trend to speak with a person of the same sex is also revealed in the answers ‘other girls’/‘other boys’. Both the girls and the boys go to peers of the same sex for information about sexuality; the opposite sex plays a subordinate role. The same is demonstrated by the fact that boys refer to their brothers and girls to their sisters when they cite siblings as important people (summarized in the graph as ‘siblings’).

Girls have learned more about sexual matters from their best female friend (or also: best male friend) (52%) than boys from their best male friend/best female friend (36%). It would appear to be rarer for boys to have such an intimate friendship with someone of the same sex; however, they are more likely to cite ‘other boys’ in general, as well as sometimes ‘other girls’. A girlfriend is a more important source of sexuality information to a boy than a boyfriend is to a girl (18% compared to 12%). For the boys there is no one person or group of people that is cited by more than half of the respondents, meaning there is no one person who can be identified as a definite main reference person.
As a result of gynaecological consultations, girls have the advantage of having another adult besides their parents. They have the opportunity to obtain information from their doctor (16%), something the boys are lacking (3%).

People Involved in Sexuality Education
14–17-year-olds by gender

However, the differences are not just down to gender, but also to background. For two thirds of the German girls, the mother is the most important person for sexuality information (64%), giving her an almost as high a percentage in 2014 as she has held in the previous years.

Among the girls with a migrant background the best female friend (or best male friend) at 53% pushes the mother to second place (46%); furthermore, reference people at school compete with the mother (43%) – they are cited as an important person for sexuality matters more often by girls with a migrant background than by German girls (35%). That means school somewhat compensates for the lacking parental significance in the sex-education process of girls with a migrant background.

Other girls from their personal environment are also cited somewhat more often, but in other regards the statements made by the girls with and without a migrant background do not differ.
The responses by the boys with a migrant background reveal that although the mother and father are equally important for sexuality matters, as is the case for German boys, the parents play a much less important role overall than they do for the German boys. The compensation strategies for the ‘absence’ of the parents are somewhat different from those of the girls from migrant families. Teachers are a less significant source of information for non-German boys than for the non-German girls (and also less significant than for the German boys). This means that there is a greater absence of adults in the sexuality education process of this group than of other groups.

For the boys with a migrant background the best male friend/best female friend takes first place among the important people in their sexuality education (42%). Boys with a migrant background are generally more likely to obtain their information from peers: other boys, the best male friend (best female friend) and siblings – mainly brothers – play a more important role for them than they do for boys from German homes. The best male/female friend, despite holding first place, is nevertheless not cited as often as he/she is by the opposite sex.

The overall impression is that German families discuss sexuality more openly in the home than migrant families.

**In detail.** What all four groups have in common regardless of gender and background is that the importance of teachers decreases with increasing age. Instead, the steady partner becomes more and more important with increasing age, and for girls doctors play an increasingly important role.

Girls, and also boys, of Turkish background experience less sex education in the home than young people from migrant families overall. The figures are particularly striking when comparing girls from Turkish families with German girls: while 64% of the latter group can count on their mother with
regard to sex education, only 27% of Turkish girls can do the same (girls from migrant families overall: 46%).

When comparing east and west Germany, it can be said that the mother is cited as a reference person more often in the east than in the west throughout the categories. Peers, on the other hand, play a greater role in the west, which could suggest a different friendship culture. When comparing urban to rural regions, it stands out that young people in urban settings are more likely to (also) receive sex education from peers than those in less densely populated areas.

A further observation from this survey is that the number of reference people increases the higher the respondents’ level of education. The differences are primarily down to the fact that the parents are cited more often. This is particularly true for the adolescents with a migrant background. Girls with a migrant background and a low level of education are only half as likely to cite their mother as a source of sex education than girls with a migrant background and a higher level of education (30% compared to 57%).

We can observe among the German boys that they are more likely to cite their father as an important person in their sex education, the higher their level of education. 30% of boys from a low education background cite their father, 33% with a moderate education level do and among the boys who are aiming for the Abitur (eighteen-plus school-leaving certificate) or who have already taken it, the father becomes more important (43% v. 40%) than the mother, who remains a steady presence regardless of the level of education.

In the small group of German girls where a parent interview was conducted with the father instead of the mother (n=48), there is a greater affinity between the girls and their fathers because they are as likely to cite their father as ‘the most important person’ for sexual matters as their mother, unlike the girls in general who are clearly focused on their mother in their communication.
Long-term trend comparison – German 1 14–17-year-olds

People Involved in Sexuality Education
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

These graphs illustrate at a glance the big differences between German girls and boys: the main people in providing sexuality education – mother, father, teachers and the best friend – vary greatly in their degree of importance for the girls, whereas the individual groups do not differ greatly from each other in their significance for the boys.

**Girls.** Although the mother still holds a central position in her daughter’s sexuality education, the slight reduction in this area that was witnessed five years ago has continued further, meaning that the mother’s position has reached a new low since the start of the surveys in 1980. The trend suggests as well that the best friend will converge even further with the mother: while only three in ten girls got advice from their best friend in 1980, this is now true for one in two girls. The declining importance of fathers for their daughters’ sex education is interesting: although fathers have never been that significant compared to the importance of mothers, in the early 1980s and even in 1994 fathers were still almost twice as important as they are now. Falling figures for both mothers and fathers: there are factors in favour of looking at the significance of the parents as a whole. The role of the parents is evidently declining in general, or is being substituted by peers and professional sexuality education in schools more than before.

**Boys.** The changes over the past 35 years have overall been much more moderate for the boys. Nevertheless there are some interesting developments here too. As was the case in 2009 as well, teachers were currently cited as reference people for sexual matters by 45% of boys – in 2009 they were almost equal to the mother, while in 2014 they have clearly overtaken her for the first time. The second new phenomenon is that fathers and mothers are now for the first time equally significant.

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1 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
for their sons’ sexuality education. The 2009 study already indicated as much, but in the current survey parity has finally been achieved, largely thanks to the drop in significance of the mother. Nevertheless this development is interesting in that the father has remained stable as a reference person for boys and has even seen a slight increase over the past ten years, while his significance is falling with regard to daughters’ sexuality education.

Boys exhibit the same trend as girls, namely the increasing tendency to obtain sex education from the best friend (among others). However, for the male sex, the role of the close confidant of the same age is not as pronounced as for the female sex.

3.1.2 Preferred reference people

If the 14–17-year-olds are asked who they would like to consult about further sexual questions, there are lots of similarities to the question about reference people for sexuality issues so far.

The most significant difference is the more frequent mention of professional reference people from the circle of adults, such as doctors, or – added as a new category in this year’s survey – staff of advice centres. Teachers are not as significant as they were, but they are still of some importance when it comes to filling knowledge gaps for sexual matters. That does not, however, exclude parents: the father and mother together are still cited most often as the accepted choices for obtaining information.
The fact that girls and boys have their specific preferences becomes clear right away when looking at the figure above. As was the case for the question about the most important people in sexuality education (and current confidants, see the next chapter 3.1.3), the father and mother are of equal importance to boys, while the mother is still the preferred parent for girls. Girls also have better access to a doctor’s expertise; as a result medical experts (in surgeries but also in advice centres) are important to them, more important than to boys. However, 12% of boys would also like to receive information from a medical expert; 15% say the experts in advice centres are among the preferred sources.

Other than that, the adolescents want peers of the same sex (other boys/other girls) to be their reference people.

The strong preference for parental sex education is particularly true for the German adolescents. The 14–17-year-olds from migrant families are less likely to prefer their parents as sources of sexual knowledge. Girls with a migrant background cite their mother 11 percentage points less often than German girls, while boys with a migrant background cite their father 12 percentage points less often and their mother 7 percentage points less often. Nevertheless – and this should not be forgotten – parents also matter to young people with a migrant background, it is just that they do not have the same outstanding importance compared to other people as they do for German young people.

The compensation strategies used by girls and boys of non-German background are different. While girls with a migrant background shift their preferences to adult contacts – teachers (plus 5 percentage points), doctors (plus 6 percentage points) and experts in advice centres (plus 4 percentage points) are cited more often by them than by their German counterparts – boys from migrant families
lag behind German boys when it comes to this set of people. Instead, they are more likely to cite their peers. Siblings are important – one in five boys with a migrant background would like to get more information from a (usually male) family member of the same generation. 30% prefer the partner; that makes her the most-cited person by boys with a migrant background.

**In detail.** The older the girls and boys, the less the significance of the parents as the preferred authority to impart knowledge. Even for the German girls, who care greatly about information from their mother, she is cited less often by the 17-year-old girls (33%) than by the 14-year-olds (49%). As is to be expected, the significance of school as a source of information for sexual subjects drops. Depending on gender and background, the significance of teachers in fact may drop by more than 50%.

With increasing age, experts at advice centres and doctors become all the more important, especially for girls. Doctors are the most-cited group for 17-year-old girls. An increasing number of girls also like to take advantage of the advice offered by experts. A quarter of the 17-year-old respondents said these were the preferred source of knowledge, while only 16% of the 14-year-olds said the same.

On the other hand, the significance of the partner also increases with age. The fact that a partner was cited more often on average is also because with increasing age young people are more likely to be in a steady relationship, giving them a further person to turn to with questions.

For that reason it is more meaningful to distinguish not by age, but by the existence of a steady relationship here. When that is done, we can see that a girlfriend is a particularly important source of information for boys. Cited by 41% of them, she is the most commonly cited person of all the potential reference people for passing on information to fill any perceived gaps in knowledge, if she exists. For boys with a migrant background in particular she is by far the most important reference person.

A boyfriend is also a popular choice for girls in a steady relationship when it comes to questions. He does not, however, have the same outstanding position as the girlfriend does for boys, since the mother and medical experts are consulted to the same extent.

Some of the young people did not give any preferred sources of knowledge since they evidently feel sufficiently informed in every area, which is why they do not wish to receive any further information. This is most often the case among the 17-year-olds (the average percentage here is 17%), but not always. Among the girls with a migrant background there is no equivalent rise in the percentage with increasing age, which is a (further) indication of this group’s particularly high need for information of. On the flipside, the German boys were particularly convinced they already knew everything of importance, because from age 16 onwards one in five of them said ‘I don’t need any further information’.
3.1.3 Confidants for sexual matters

In order to maintain continuity to the previous chapters, we will first look at the responses of the 14–17-year-olds. However, the question about a confidant for sexual matters is also important for the young adults, which is why they were asked as well. The results for the 18–25-year-olds are shown separately at the end of this sub-chapter.

14–17-year-olds

As was the case for the previous surveys, the presence of a confidant for sexual matters has become the norm for a clear majority of the German 14–17-year-olds. 90% of the girls and 83% of the boys confirmed they had such a person, revealing a (small) difference between the sexes. Young people of the same age with a migrant background equally confirm the presence of a confidant (83%/82%); they do not, however, reach the level of girls from German families.

In detail. The presence of a confidant is greatly dependent on age. When looking more closely, it is particularly the 14-year-olds who do not have anybody with whom they can openly discuss sexual matters. This is true for all 14-year-olds in general, but the factors gender and background determine the degree: among German girls the percentage without a confidant is smallest, at 15%, among the boys, regardless of background, one in four do not have someone like this, and among the girls with a migrant background, this affects more than one in three 14-year-olds.

In addition, the level of education also appears to have an impact on the availability of a confidant. For girls with a migrant background the question of education has the greatest relevance: only 69% of those with just a basic level of education say they have a confidant, while this is true for 92% of those with a high level of education. The same is true for girls with a German background and for the boys, but to a lesser extent: the higher the level of education, the more likely the young people are to have a confidant.

Turkish girls are worse off than other girls: 28% of them say they do not have a confidant.

Long-term trend comparison – German ¹ 14–17-year-olds

Even though the increase is very gradual and subject to fluctuations, the trend suggests that in a few years’ time the number of boys who say they have a confidant will have reached that of the girls.

¹ 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
Confidants generally come from the same circle of people as was cited as important for sexuality education. Among the 14–17-year-olds these people are still largely identical. The mother/father are both educators and confidants, the same is true for peers, be they siblings, the partner (both of secondary significance) or the best friend. The best friend is more important as a confidant than as a reference person. Two thirds of the girls and six in ten boys cite the best friend as a confidant for sexual matters, making this person a central figure for both sexes.

Adults who are not the parents are an exception. The young people make a distinction here: teachers, and for girls doctors, have a significant role when it comes to obtaining information about sexuality and contraception, but few see them as confidants.

Differences based on gender and background are roughly the same as they were for the most important people providing sexuality education:

- The father and mother differ in significance for girls and boys
- People of the same sex are more attractive options
- For young people with a migrant background, the parents are less likely to be confidants
- The best friend is given greater significance to compensate for this
In detail. As was the case regarding the preferred reference person to impart knowledge, it is true for confidants too that the older adolescents, the less significant the father and mother become. Their significance remains strongest for the German girls, who have a strong bond to their mother, but even here the percentage drops from 66% for the 14-year-olds to 52% for the 17-year-olds.

The reason why the partner is not yet very significant for the 14–17-year-olds is because many at this age do not yet have a steady relationship. If a steady partner is on the scene, he/she becomes an important confidant: half of the respondents in this age bracket who have a steady relationship say their partner is a confidant for sexual matters. 56% of the German boys list their partner, making her their number one confidant, without this reducing the significance of others peers.

Sex-education topics are addressed less often in Turkish homes; the parents here are generally seen less often as confidants for sexual matters (for that reason?).

Young adults: 18–25-year-olds

The overall impression of the confidants for the 18–25-year-olds is similar to that of the 14–17-year-olds. Nevertheless there are some striking differences. The most significant relates to the importance of the partner: since more than half of the young adults are in a steady relationship – some of them are even married already – the partner is much more likely to be the first port of call for confidential sexual matters. While only 15% of 14–17-year-olds cite their partner, 50%/43% (young women/young men) of young adults do so.

Associated with this is a drop in parental significance, but not to the same extent to which the partner gains in importance. Especially for young German women, for whom the mother plays a significant
role in their sex education, the mother remains highly significant for much of their 20s. Among the 23-year-olds, 48% still cite her as a confidant, while for the 24-year-olds 41% cite their mother, still putting her slightly above the 40% mark. She is only substantially less significant for the 25-year-olds (34%).

Confidants for Sexual Matters
Comparison 14–17-year-olds/18–25-year-olds

Some young women appear to develop a closer relationship of trust to their gynaecological consultant. Although some of the increase here, a doubling from 9% of 14–17-year-olds to 18% of 18–25-year-olds, results from the fact that with increasing age more women have visited a doctor for a gynaecological consultation, even in the direct comparison between those where this applies in both age groups, doctors are cited more often as confidants by the older group.

In detail. Another phenomenon is that with increasing age the participants do not just switch confidants; rather, the number of confidants increases overall. The adolescents preferred to talk with specific people with whom they have a particularly close relationship, whereas the young adults expanded their circle. The partner is an additional confidant. 18–25-year-olds are also more likely to confide in other peers. The best friend becomes even more important to young women, compared to the 14–17-year-old girls (76%, 10 percentage points above the figure for the 14–17-year-olds); however, other girls/women (plus 9 points), other boys/men (plus 6 points), the sister (plus 7) and the brother (plus 4) are cited more. The young men exhibit the same developments.

Young women and men with a migrant background differ from their German counterparts in that they cite their partner less often as a confidant. However, they are also less likely to be in a steady relationship. For young women from migrant families, sisters are quite significant (27%); they compensate within the family for the absence of the mother as a confidant.
4 The role of the parental home

The data so far has shown that the parents – for girls this means the mother, for boys this means the father and mother equally – play an important role in their children’s sexuality education during the teenage years (14–17); they are of an almost unchanged high significance as confidants or reference people to whom the adolescents and young adults would like to turn for perceived gaps in their knowledge, and not just for the younger respondents. As the adolescents get older, the parents lose their dominant position as reference people, since further people, such as the partner or doctors are added to the list. A qualifying note: these statements are primarily true for the young Germans. In migrant families, the boys/young men are far less likely to be able to talk to their father or mother, even when it comes to general sex education.

4.1 Communication in the home in general

The differences are already obvious when looking at the general questions about how much the respondents discussed intimate matters with their parents or to what extent sexuality and relationships were topics of discussion in the home. In homes without a migrant background there is largely a good relationship of trust between the parents, particularly the mothers, and their daughters and sons, which also makes conversations about sexual subjects possible. In families with a migrant background an open atmosphere surrounding these topics is only possible in half of the cases, for sons less so than for daughters.

Are Sexuality and Relationships a Topic in the Home?
By background

Communication about sexual subjects increases between parents and children as they get older. This is true regardless of background: in all four groups studied, the 14/15-year-olds are 10 percentage points less likely than the average across all the ages to report an open atmosphere; the highest
figures are among the 21–25-year-olds. In this group 79% of the young German women and 57% of the young women from migrant families say that conversations about sexuality and relationships take place in their family (young men: 67%/49%).

In detail. However, the development to this point differs depending on the young people’s gender. Among the boys with and without a migrant background there is a big leap from 14/15 to 16/17. Comparing these two groups, the percentage affirming an open atmosphere jumps by 13 and 12 percentage points respectively, remaining at the new level during subsequent years. There is a leap for the girls from 14/15 to 16/17 as well. It’s more moderate here than for the boys at 7/6 percentage points; however, in contrast to the boys, the yes percentages still continue to rise here (slowly) with increasing age.

The different starting levels depending on gender and background remain in place; there are no changes that could be considered ‘catching up’, except for the more rapid increase among the boys insofar as the 16/17-year-old boys reach the same level as the 14/15-year-old girls, with a couple of years’ delay with regard to communication within the family.

The higher the level of education, the more likely it is that there is communication about sexual topics within the home. The figures change particularly noticeably in families with a migrant background. Among the boys/young men with a migrant background, the figures change noticeably. Among the boys/young men of non-German background with a basic level of education, only 28% say they have conversations in the home about sexuality; among those attending Gymnasien (academic secondary schools) this is true for more than twice as many, at 58%. The increases are similar among the girls at 35%/62%.

The Turkish girls and boys, where sexuality is rarely openly addressed in the home, remain significantly below average compared to those with a migrant background in general.

With the second general question about communication in the home, adolescents and young adults were asked to use a seven-step scale from ‘I disagree completely’ to ‘I agree completely’ to evaluate their situation at home with regard to the statement ‘I can talk to my parents about all intimate questions’. If the top three categories are summarized as ‘agreement’, then the average reveals almost the same percentages as we got as yes percentages for the question about whether sexuality is addressed in the home.

Nevertheless there is a difference between these two questions for young people, because unlike when sexuality is addressed openly, it is quite irrespective of the age whether intimate matters can be discussed or not.

Around one in three adolescents/young adults of non-German background choose one of the responses with a negative sign (rejection of the statement) from the choices. Among the German families the corresponding percentage is roughly one fifth (girls/young women 17%, boys/young men 20%). Adolescents who are part of this sub-group are therefore unlikely to have someone to talk to who is a parent. This target group tends to need the most support in order to compensate for the lacking support in the home from the relevant reference people.
4.2 Contraceptive advice at home

This chapter is about looking at sex education imparted by parents more specifically. Since contraception is of central significance within a sex life, the survey focused on parental contraceptive advice via several questions.

Was there parental contraceptive advice?

The majority of the German young people between 14 and 17 said they had been informed about contraceptive options by their parents: among the girls this was true for a good 60%, among the boys for around half of those interviewed. When the young people with a migrant background were asked, they were much less likely to say their parents had advised them about contraception: 41% of the girls and a good third of the boys responded in the affirmative. That means even the boys from German families are more likely to receive contraceptive advice than the girls from migrant families.

If the young people are already sexually active, they are significantly more likely to have received such advice in the home. This is true for the girls and boys with and without a migrant background. Of the sexually active girls with a migrant background, one in two received contraceptive advice from her parents; however, among the boys with a migrant background, it is still only a minority of the sexually active ones who have discussed contraception with their parents (41%).
Generally speaking, the difference between the sexually inexperienced and sexually experienced lies between 12 and 13 percentage points in the different groups (exception: boys from migrant families with just 7 percentage points), meaning that parents clearly also make their decision to provide the relevant education because they think it is necessary.

**In detail.** The level of education plays a not insignificant role in this area. The higher the level of education, the more likely the young people were to have received contraceptive advice in the home. Girls and boys from educationally disadvantaged social groups are particularly unlikely to receive parental advice (young people with a migrant background: under 30%). German girls form a positive exception to this rule: almost two in three daughters receive contraceptive advice from their parents, regardless of their educational background.

It furthermore stands out that migrant families with a Turkish background are much less likely to give contraceptive advice than migrants from other countries: they deviate by 12 percentage points for the girls and 8 percentage points for the boys from the average for young people with a migrant background, and the figure for this group is already lower than that for the German adolescents.

Another recognizable trend, albeit not a particularly surprising one, is that the number of respondents confirming they have received contraceptive advice goes up with increasing age – the increase in sexual activity plays into this of course. However, it should be highlighted that girls in German families get contraceptive advice very early: more than half (54%) of the 14-year-olds responded in the affirmative, a figure reached by neither the older girls with a migrant background nor the boys of non-German backgrounds of any age.

Families seem to be more open in their communication in east Germany, at least with regards to parental advice to girls (German background; difference between west and east: 9 percentage points).

If there are close religious ties, regardless of the denomination, contraception is discussed less often by parents and their children – in many cases this could be because the adolescents are expected to be sexually restrained and the parents therefore do not see a need to discuss contraception with them.

The responses of the 18–25-year-olds, who were also asked if they had received contraceptive advice at home, largely match the adolescents' responses. The maximum deviation among young women and men with and without a migrant background is 3 percentage points.

**Long-term trend comparison – German ³ 14–17-year-olds**

The long-term trend reveals an up and down with regard to parental contraceptive advice. The clearest change can be seen between the initial survey in 1980 and the second survey in 1994: during this period the percentages of girls and boys who confirmed their parents had advised them about contraception leapt up, from the initial figures of 37%/25% (girls/boys) to almost double that. In the mid-nineties, it was already a majority of girls who received contraceptive advice, among the boys it was almost one in two. Over the following ten years there was a further moderate increase. Boys crossed the 50% mark in 1998. However, they only reached the girls’ 1994 level in 2005. The years 2001 and 2005 saw the highest figures: in 2001 72% of the girls and in 2005 60% of the boys said they had been advised on contraception by their parents. Those years marked a turning point.

³ 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
Contraceptive Advice at Home
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

There is currently a reverse trend. The slight decline that was seen in 2009, which initially appeared as nothing but a blip, has increased in the current survey of 2014. It is clear that young people today do not receive contraceptive advice from their parents as often as they did at the start of the millennium. The girls’ percentage today corresponds to that of the mid-90s. The boys’ situation also resembles that of before the millennium: around one in two boys currently say they received contraceptive advice from their parents.
Parental contraceptive recommendations

When it comes to giving their daughters and sons contraceptive advice, parents are evidently less likely to settle for just a single contraceptive, even though the way the question is phrased – ‘the most suitable form of contraception’ – suggests respondents should pick just one method. However, at least 60% of the 14–17-year-old girls and boys said their parents had recommended both the pill and condoms. There is nonetheless a gender-specific slant to the recommendation, because boys are almost always (more than 90%) told to use condoms (as well) (pill: 60%), while for girls the pill at 87% is recommended more often than condoms (69%).

With regard to condoms, there are no differences in the parental recommendations depending on background, but for the pill, parents of non-German backgrounds are not quite as likely to (also) recommend it as German parents. The difference here is around 10 percentage points for the girls and boys.

It is not just the number of times these contraceptives were mentioned that is of interest; it is also interesting to see how often they were cited on their own or with the other.

![Fig. 12](image)

This graph demonstrates that the majority of parents, both of sons and daughters, advise both options, condoms and the pill. This does not necessarily mean that the parental recommendation is aimed at a combined use of these two methods. It is just as possible that parents consider condoms and the pill as equally good for safe contraception. At least this confirms that many parents stay away from thinking purely about what options their son/daughter has for their own active use, and are looking instead at the situation where contraception is to be used as a whole. However, this is a
new phenomenon on this scale, even though the recommendation of both the pill and condoms already went up in the last survey.

Naturally, the (smaller) percentage of parents that do not recommend both options are very gender-specific in their advice. In these cases sons were almost exclusively recommended condoms and daughters the pill.

Other contraceptive methods other than the pill and condoms only play a minor role. Chemical contraceptives, the IUD (coil), other hormonal methods and other forms of contraception were only cited by a maximum of 5% of the respondents in the four groups.

The same is true for unreliable methods such as taking advantage of the infertile days or interrupting sexual intercourse, though it stands out that these responses came most commonly from the boys with a foreign background (6%/5%).

**In detail.** A small percentage of the parents made their hostility towards their children’s sexual activities clear during the conversation about contraception. ‘Abstinence’ seemed the best recommendation to them in order to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. This attitude is more widespread in homes with a migrant background. This option was recommended particularly often to girls with a migrant background (15%; girls with a Turkish background: 28%). Level of education is also a factor, because with an increasing level of education the recommendation of abstinence drops, even in migrant families, while trust in the pill and condoms grows. Depending on their denomination, those with close ties to their religion and Muslim girls in general are more likely to be told to abstain.

This recommendation is made particularly often to very young girls. Of the 14-year-old girls from migrant families, three in ten were recommended this, while it is still 11% for the German girls of this age. It is rare for 17-year-olds to report such a recommendation; even for the 17-year-old girls with a migrant background the figure drops to 5%.

Interestingly, there is no correlation between age and the recommendation to use condoms. Condoms are advised across the spectrum, even the youngest respondents report this. More than 90% of boys and 70% of girls aged 14 were recommended condoms as a form of birth control. The recommendation to use the pill increases with the age of the child, more so for the boys than for the girls.

Overall, we can increasingly see that parents’ recommendations do not focus so strongly on just one method anymore. That affects the dual citation of the pill and condoms, as discussed above, but also the spectrum of the other contraceptive options. In 2009 for example, only 2% of German girls cited ‘other’ contraceptives besides the coil and chemical contraceptives. Today, in 2014, the hormonal alternatives to the pill alone (Nuvaring, Depo-Provera, injections, patches) were cited by 5%; in addition 1% cited a diaphragm/cervical cap and 4% the coil.

**Level of satisfaction with the parental contraceptive advice**

Most of the young people were very satisfied with the advice they received about contraception. For much more than 90% of respondents who received such advice from their parents, the conversation was seen positively.

The greatest satisfaction levels come from the German adolescents. Only 5% expressed dissatisfaction. Girls with a migrant background were most likely to find the conversation less satisfying; 11% were unsatisfied in this group, putting the percentage into double figures (girls from Turkish families:
15% dissatisfied). This group was recommended abstinence particularly often: it is likely that the increased number of dissatisfied survey participants is associated with the fact that the recommendation to stay away from sexual contacts is not always seen as a satisfactory answer to contraceptive questions by girls with a migrant background.

Interestingly, there is no significant connexion between satisfaction and demographic factors such as age, religious denomination, family constellation, level of sexuality education, participation in sexuality education in school etc. If parents advise their sons and daughters, then they almost always consider this advice as helpful.

One exception: although the majority of daughters in whose homes sexuality in general is not a major subject, but who nonetheless received contraceptive advice, still express satisfaction, the number of satisfied members of this group is still substantially less than the average. If contraceptive advice took place without being embedded in a generally open climate where conversations about sexuality and relationships can take place unselfconsciously, then it is not always successful. For the girls with a migrant background, this may also be the case because this group was told particularly often just to remain sexually abstinent.
5  Sexuality education at school
5.1  Provision of sex-education classes

As we already saw in previous chapters, the parents are the first port of call for 14–17-year-olds when it comes to more intimate sexual questions and questions about contraception. Only a fraction of the respondents considered a teacher as a confidant (female: 1%, male: 2%). However, schools hold a significant position when it comes to imparting basic facts. More than 80% of the girls and boys said they largely got their information about sexuality, contraception etc. from school (alongside other sources). 43% of boys said a teacher was ‘an important person’ in their sex education, making school the main source of sex education for this group. And when it comes to filling any knowledge gaps, school is an accepted institution, at least for some of the younger respondents.

Almost all the young people surveyed now have access to sex-education classes: 93% (average) said they had discussed sex-education topics in class. Among young people with a migrant background the percentages are 90% and up.

Long-term trend comparison, German 4 14–17-year-olds, by region

Sexuality Education in School
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds, by region

Compared to the survey five years ago, we can see that an increasing number of young people from east Germany say they have addressed sex education in school, while the ‘yes’ responses in west Germany has remained at approximately the same level. That means that schools in east Germany have finally managed to catch up with or even overtake western schools with regard to teaching

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4 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
sexuality education: 95% of the German young people in east Germany said they received sex education classes, while this is true for 93% of the girls and 94% of the boys in the west.

Looking at the figures over the decades, west Germany saw a continuous increase in sex education in schools up until the millennium. In the east, the increase was particularly striking in the 90s, after Germany’s reunification: while fewer than half of young people in east Germany said they had received sex education classes in school in 1996, the figures had reached 81%/78% (girls/boys) by 1998.

In the west the starting level the first time the question was asked in 1994 was already very high at more than 80%. The 90% mark was crossed in 2001. Since then the figures have stagnated at this high level.

**In detail.** Only the respondents with a low level of education were less likely to say they had received sex education in school, with a deviation of about 8 percentage points on average.

One interesting observation is that the majority of young people who do not consider themselves sufficiently educated about sexual matters (7% in total) still say they discussed sex-education topics in school. 85% of them say they had had sex-education classes.
5.2 Subjects covered in sexuality education in school

The subject of sexuality is multi-faceted; as a result, there are many different areas that can be addressed in class. Not all are treated equally in school. Of the 18 areas this survey asked about, six were given priority: sexual organs, menstruation/ovulation/female fertile days, sexually transmitted infections (incl. HIV/AIDS), contraception, physical/sexual development of adolescents, pregnancy/childbirth. Looking at all 14–17-year-olds as a whole, 70% and more of them say these topics are ‘addressed in class’, which separates them clearly from the other topics. Teaching about anatomical aspects and biological processes is given precedence – along with preventing sexually transmitted infections and information about contraception, which take places three and four in the frequency ranking. The only two topics more students learned about were the male and female sexual organs and menstruation.

A further three topics were cited by between 40% and 50% of young respondents. They include two topics that are still considered relatively taboo in parts of our society: homosexuality and sexual abuse. Looking at the figures for ‘love and affection’, the emotional aspect of sexual encounters is addressed comparatively often.

According to German adolescents, the topic of abortion was addressed similarly often. This is one of the few topics (alongside pregnancy/childbirth and homosexuality) where girls from different backgrounds make different statements (difference: 6 percentage points); otherwise the responses of the girls with and without a migrant background are almost identical.
The boys’ responses on the other hand differ depending on their background. Boys with a migrant background are consistently less likely to say they discussed the topics listed in class. At times the differences reach a sizable 10 to 11 percentage points. This is particularly true for topics that directly affect the female body: menstruation/ovulation, pregnancy/childbirth, abortion – but it also includes the topic of contraception. There is only one topic that they list more often than their German peers and that is ‘love and affection’.

The topics of masturbation (29%), male circumcision (25%), pornography (22%) and prostitution (20%) were addressed comparatively rarely in class.

**In detail.** Some topics are discussed to differing extents, depending on the young people’s level of education, or at least the respondents remember addressing them to different degrees, maybe even depending on how much they were interested in the topic and how much it affected them personally. It is striking that girls and boys with a basic level of education and a migrant background cite the topic of abuse more often than others (57% and 46% respectively, compared to the average of 42%). Generally speaking, the respondents who were educationally disadvantaged seem to have been confronted with physical developments – both those of their own body during puberty and those of the unborn child during pregnancy – less than the other respondents.

Unfortunately this also affects the important topic of contraception. There is a gap of 12 percentage points between those with a basic level of education (non-academic secondary school, special-needs school) and those who attended academic secondary schools. Among the German girls, where educational differences often have the least impact, the difference is less in this area too. However, at 6 percentage points, there is still a gap.

The topic of ‘sexually transmitted infections’ is not affected by the young people’s level of education.

Since sex-education classes in schools are taught in several years, it is likely that 17-year-olds will have discussed more of the 18 topics in class than the 14-year-olds. And this turns out to be the case, but only to a limited degree. Topics that tend to show up at the lower end of the list of citations are already confirmed by the majority of 14-year-olds. There is no ‘catching up’ with the top topics. The topic with the greatest difference between the 14 and 17-year-olds is abortion, as it is more frequently addressed with the older respondents (14-year-olds: 27%, 17-year-olds: 45%).

The topic of sexually transmitted infections increases its reach by 11 percentage points (a rise from 72% to 83%), contraception by 9 points (from 75% to 84%).

In east German schools, the spectrum of topics discussed in class seems to be broader. The more marginal topics are more of a focus here. Homosexuality for example is cited 15 percentage points more often here than by students in west Germany, sexual abuse 11 percentage points more often, but also the interaction of the sexes (marriage and relationships, the roles of the man and the woman in a family: plus 10/11 percentage points).

Schools generally react to debates in society at large by addressing the topic of homosexuality more than they used to. Homosexuality is addressed far more often in sex-education classes today than it was around ten years ago.
### TABLE: Homosexuality in sex-education classes; 14–17-year-old German girls and boys – trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %
6 The role of external experts
6.1 Doctors

For one in six girls/young women, a doctor played an important role in their sex education (according to their own statements). Around the same number of 18–25-year-olds count doctors among their circle of confidants for sexual matters and for almost a third of the 14–17-year-olds they are a recognized source when the young people feel they have knowledge deficits regarding sexual topics. It is likely that ‘doctors’ in this context primarily refers to gynaecologists – one indication of this is that medical professionals are almost irrelevant for boys.

For that reason the appointment with a gynaecologist has been given its own chapter: when does this take place? With what motivation and what result? When are gynaecological surgeries used for contraceptive advice?

6.1.1 Gynaecological consultation

Age at first visit. Sooner or later more or less all girls and young women see a gynaecologist. Looked at across the entire age range, 13% say they have not yet seen a gynaecologist. 5% of the 14–25-year-olds were, according to their own statements, not even 13 years old when they went the first time, 7% were older than 17. The vast majority of first visits therefore took place between 14 and 17. That also becomes very clear from the ‘yes’ responses⁵ in the individual year groups between 14 and 25:

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⁵ Calculated from the percentages of those who gave an age plus those who responded ‘I can’t remember anymore how old I was’.
At the same time the figure illustrates that a greater number of German girls have seen a gynaecologist at a younger age, compared to girls with a migrant background. For the 14, 16 and 17-year-olds, the gap lies between 8 to 11 percentage points, whereas it is slightly lower at 5 percentage points for the 15-year-olds. At this age more than half the girls said they had already seen a gynaecologist. At age 19 more than 90% of the non-German young women also confirmed they had seen a gynaecologist, a figure that is reached for the German girls at age 17.

The more gradual growth in the ‘yes’ responses by girls/young women with a migrant background does not imply they have a lesser interest in or a careless attitude to their health: the differences are to do with the fact that German girls experience sexual activity at a younger age, given them the motivation to see a gynaecologist for contraception (cf. the following discussion about the motivation for the first visit as well as ch. 11 Experiences in the Sexual Sphere).

**In detail.** Generally speaking, sexually experienced girls and young women have already been to a gynaecologist. Only a tiny minority (1%/2%) of them had not. If we limit our focus on the sexually active 14–17-year-old girls, the figures are somewhat higher at 4%/6% who have not yet been to see a gynaecologist despite being sexually active; however, this is the exception in this age bracket too. Among the German girls it is those who had sexual intercourse for the first time at the young age of 14 or earlier who are most likely to have forgone a gynaecological examination/consultation to date (7%).

The younger the girls were the first time they had sexual intercourse, the lower the average age for seeing a gynaecologist was – an initial indicator that it is often the contraceptive question that causes girls to see a gynaecologist.

**Reason(s) for seeing a gynaecologist for the first time.** When asked directly about their motivation, a good half of the girls/young women of German background and almost 40% of the girls/young women with a migrant background said it was the desire to learn more about the topic of contraception (and/or have contraception prescribed). Among the sexually experienced the emphasis for their motivation to visit was clearly contraception – more so for German girls/young women (61%) than for girls/young women from migrant families (54%). However, even among the sexually inexperienced girls/young women between 14 and 25, 20% and 10% respectively said that contraceptive questions were (part of) the reason for their first visit. Particularly the 14–17-year-olds were interested in this, even if they were not yet sexually active (23%/15%).

The responses of the oldest age group (21–25-year-olds) make a more reliable statement about the primary motivation than the entire age range from 14–25, because this bracket also includes the responses of those who went to see a gynaecologist when they were a bit older. By age 21 almost all the young women had been to see a gynaecologist at least once.
Reason(s) for Seeing a Gynaecologist for the First Time
Young women 21–25, by background

It remains the case that a young German woman aged 21–25 is more likely than her non-German peers to say – among other things because some of the respondents gave several responses – that the reason for the initial visit was that she wanted to learn about/obtain contraception. This was the case for more than half of the young German women (57%), compared to 41% of the young women from migrant families.

A good third of the young women in both groups say menstrual problems had been the reason for their first visit. The response ‘undefined lower abdominal complaints’ aims in a similar direction – young women from migrant families cite this reason more often (20%) than young German women (9%).

The vaccination against the human papilloma virus (HPV) or a consultation about it motivated 8% and 5% respectively to see a gynaecologist for the first time. It is sensible here to distinguish by age as the debate about this vaccination has only arisen in recent years; and the age recommendation for the vaccination, which should occur prior to a first sexual contact if possible, was lowered again to 9–14 years in mid-2014. That is clearly reflected in the answers of the different age groups:

**TABLE: Reason(s) for seeing a gynaecologist for the first time; here: 'HPV vaccine/advice about the HPV vaccine' by age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls/young women</th>
<th>14-15 y.o.</th>
<th>16-17 y.o.</th>
<th>18-20 y.o.</th>
<th>21-25 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German background</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant background</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %
It can be seen that the younger German girls in particular are more likely to take advantage of this option.

Some of the girls surveyed gave multiple reasons for their first visit. On average they gave 1.1 reasons.

**In detail.** Happily, ‘worried about being pregnant’ was overall a relatively minor reason (3%/6%) for seeing a gynaecologist for the first time. 4% and 8% respectively give this response in the smaller group of sexually active girls/young women. The figure is strikingly higher among the girls/young women with a migrant background who were 14 or younger when they had sexual intercourse for the first time (15%), though it has to be said that this does not affect the girls who are currently 14–17 and sexually active (for this age group the percentages fall within the general average). Instead, it refers to now-adult young women with early sexual experiences.

The HPV vaccine is now distributed regardless of level of education among German girls; that was not yet the case in 2010, when the debate about cervical cancer and the vaccine against it was reflected for the first time to any noteworthy degree in the girls’ responses (back then, given spontaneously under ‘other’): the higher the girls’ education, the more frequent the responses referring to this topic. For girls from non-German families, this is still the case today: 15% of girls who attend an academic secondary school say they saw a gynaecologist for the first time because of their desire for more information on the vaccine, or to be vaccinated – this group is no different from their German peers – while the corresponding figure is merely 5% for girls attending a non-academic secondary school (moderate level of education: 7%).

**Evaluation of the initial visit.** More than four fifths of the girls/young women were happy with how their initial gynaecological visit went. 44% said it went roughly as they had expected. Quite a few were in fact positively surprised – among the German girls/young women the figure is 42%, almost the same as the number of girls who said it had been as expected (45%). Among the girls with a migrant background the figure is slightly lower at 37% (compared to 44%), but it is still a sizable number.

A small group, however, felt their visit had been less pleasant than expected. The responses here differ slightly depending on background: 13% of the girls/young women of German background and 18% of girls/young women with a migrant background voiced this viewpoint. Among the Turkish girls/young women one in four said the visit had not conformed to their expectations and was perceived more negatively than expected.

While there is no difference between the responses of sexually experienced and sexually inexperienced German girls/young women, among the girls/young women with a migrant background it is particularly those who are not yet sexually active who were more likely to feel negatively (21%; sexually active: 16%). This is again because of the young Turkish girls/women, of whom many are sexually restrained.

The initial visit seems to have been more difficult for those who do not yet consider themselves sufficiently educated about sexual matters, which is in turn associated with the fact that this small group of girls/young women often do not have anyone at home or elsewhere with whom they can discuss sexual matters. These girls/young women were much less likely than others to have ideas in advance about what the appointment would be like (26%; average: 44%). The majority of them are then positively surprised (‘more pleasant than expected’: 47%, more than average), but on the other hand there are also more who have negative memories of their first visit (25%, average: 14%).
6.1.2 Seeing a doctor for contraceptive advice

The targeted additional question about whether they had ever seen a doctor to get contraceptive advice is answered in the affirmative by around two in three girls and young women between the ages of 14 and 25. The percentages vary in the individual age groups from 23% among the 14/15-year-olds up to 77% among the 21–25-year-olds. This increase is crucially connected with the girls becoming sexually active over the years, as that is when the contraceptive question becomes a concrete one. Among the sexually active it is on average four out of five (81%) who got contraceptive advice from a doctor.

**In detail.** Among the sexually active girls/young women with a migrant background, the number who received such advice was somewhat lower than that of the German girls/young women (76% compared to 82%).

Those girls who had sexual intercourse for the first time at 15, 14, or earlier were no less likely to confirm having received such contraceptive advice than other girls. However, when looking only at the responses of the 14–17-year-old girls, it is definitely those who became sexually active early, at 14 or younger, who are most likely not (yet) to have received contraceptive advice. 23% of the German girls who became sexually active early say they had received no such advice; the figure is greater for the corresponding girls with a migrant background, although the sample number is small here, so that deviations are not statistically sound. The differences indicate that a consultation took place somewhat after the fact of becoming sexually active (cf. the subsequent discussion about the reason for the contraceptive advice).

The percentage of respondents who got such advice is lower among those who only became sexually active as adults. This is irrespective of background. This does not have to mean thoughtlessness and ignorance, because almost all of these young women have seen a gynaecologist, meaning the opportunity for such advice was given. It could instead be an indicator that these young women refused contraceptive advice because they deliberately remained abstinent for a long time – during this period they had no need for contraceptive advice – and after their late start to being sexually active, children were immediately welcome.

Of the girls/young women without sexual experiences, 25% on average sought contraceptive advice from a doctor.
In the long-term trend, the number of 14–17-year-olds (with German citizenship/German background) who had already received advice about contraception from a doctor has risen slightly. The maximum value to date occurred in 2009: the average figure for those who had received such contraceptive advice was 46%, 10 percentage points higher than in 1994, the year when data regarding this issue was first collected.

The figures this time round are roughly similar to those from five years ago, both with regard to the contraceptive advice for the sexually active and the sexually still inactive girls (figures in both cases 1 percentage point lower than in 2009, which is not statistically relevant). The fact that the figure overall is 3 points below the total value for 2009 is because the number of girls practising sexual restraint has gone up; as a result their responses have a greater impact on the overall figure.

**Reason(s) for seeking contraceptive advice from a doctor.** When asked what the reason for the contraceptive consultation was, the most common response given by the girls and young women was ‘I wanted general information’ (41%). For those who were not yet sexually active, general information was naturally even more of a motivation (74%).

The answers of those girls and young women who were already sexually active are more interesting. Did they get contraceptive advice pre-emptively or only after they first had intercourse?

Even among the sexually experienced, many wanted to get general information, without a closer connexion to potential first sexual activities (37%). The same number said that they felt ‘it could happen soon’ and therefore wanted to get information (also 37%). For more than one in five

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6 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
girls/young women, the first act of intercourse was the trigger to look into contraception; they sought this advice 'shortly after the first time' (22%). In addition, a new relationship also played a certain role: 17% sought contraceptive advice for this reason (potentially among other things, multiple responses were possible).

**Reason(s) for Seeking Contraceptive Advice from a Doctor**

**Girls/young women by background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
<th>Sexually experienced</th>
<th>German background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General desire for information, no specific reason</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was shortly before the first time</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was shortly after the first time</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New relationship, contraception had to be addressed anew</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 18**

Girls/young women from migrant families are somewhat more likely to wait until after becoming sexually active before looking into contraception. They are 6 percentage points more likely to pick the option 'it was shortly after the first time' and 6 and 5 points respectively less likely to say 'it was shortly before' or 'information without a specific cause'.

**In detail.** Among the sexually experienced girls/young women, the age at which they became sexually active has an impact on when they seek contraceptive advice. Girls/young women who had sexual intercourse at a very young age are less likely to get information about contraception from a doctor beforehand than adolescents/young adults who were older when they first had intercourse.

This is particularly true for those who were 14 or younger. In this group of girls 30% saw a doctor in advance in order to be informed about contraceptive methods, the figure is 9 percentage points higher for those who were 15 (39%) and for the older girls the figure also fluctuates around 40%.

The most conscientious about the contraceptive issue – and therefore the counter-group to those who are sexually active from a young age, as it were – are those who were 18 when they had sexual intercourse for the first time: 44% of them said the reason for getting information was that they felt they were about to become sexually active. The difference between this group of and those who were sexually active early on is 14 percentage points. However, the direct comparison of the figures for
those who only become active about contraceptive advice after first having sex are even more impressive: this figure is only 12% for those who had sex for the first time at 18. Among those who became sexually active very young, it is 33%!

TABLE: Reason for getting contraceptive advice from a doctor; here: 'it was shortly after the first time' by age of first sexual intercourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First sexual intercourse at 14 y.o. or younger</th>
<th>15 y.o.</th>
<th>16 y.o.</th>
<th>17 y.o.</th>
<th>18 y.o. or older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'It was shortly after the first time'</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figures in %</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who had sexual intercourse for the first time when they were 19 or older are also less likely to say they obtained information shortly before (33%). However, this is not because these young women get information (too) late – in this regard they fall into the average. Instead, they are particularly likely to say they sought contraceptive advice quite generally, without a specific reason (51%; average for all sexually active girls/young women: 37%).

Those meanwhile who had intercourse the first time with someone they hardly knew – and often spontaneously in this case – probably had less time to get information about contraception in advance. 31% of this group said they had only had a doctor’s consultation afterwards. Only 24% sensed it would ‘soon’ happen and therefore sought contraceptive advice in advance, which is quite different for the girls/young women who became sexually active in a steady relationship (42%).

It seems to be more common in east Germany to get prophylactic advice about contraception because girls/young women (German background) are more likely to say it was for general advice without a specific purpose (51%, respondents from west Germany: 39%), while the girls/young women in west Germany are more situational (shortly before the first time: 39%, respondents from east Germany: 26%).

Prescription of a contraceptive in response to the contraceptive consultation. The 14–17-year-old girls who confirmed they had had a contraceptive consultation were also asked if they had been prescribed a contraceptive.

Almost all of the now sexually active girls said ‘yes’ to this question (92%). If the sexually experienced girls are compared by background, the contraceptive consultation was as likely to end in the prescription of a contraceptive for the girls with a migrant background as for the girls from German families (89% v. 93%).

It makes almost no difference whether the first sexual intercourse took place very early or only later: if girls who had their first sexual experiences at 14 or younger saw a doctor for contraceptive advice, then they were prescribed a contraceptive almost as often as older girls (88% compared to 94%/93% among those who were 15/16 when they became sexually active for the first time). And no less than 100% of the small group of 17-year-old girls who only became sexually active at their current age confirmed that they had been prescribed a contraceptive.

However, even around half of the girls who had not yet had sexual intercourse at the time of the survey said they had received a contraceptive. In this case background has a big impact: for German girls the figure is 52%, meaning that somewhat more than one in two got a contraceptive prescribed.
as part of the consultation, while this was only true for one in three (34%) girls with a migrant background.

6.2 Advice centres

Obtaining advice about contraception in a gynaecological practice is an avenue only open to girls/young women. However, there are also other facilities that offer such advice, and in this case for both sexes: advice centres. Young people definitely recognize the expertise of these institutions: 24%/20% of the girls (with/without a migrant background) and 13%/16% of the boys list them among those sources from which they would ‘prefer’ to obtain information about topics where they feel they have gaps in their knowledge.

However, in reality, advice centres only play a minor role. Of all the adolescents and young adults between 14 and 25, only 7% (average) said they had already been to an advice centre to get information about contraception. The figures vary slightly depending on gender and background (between 5% and 9%), but none of the four groups reach double digits. It also plays virtually no role whether the information about this has come from adolescents or young adults. The difference between the 14–17-year-olds on the one hand and the 18–25-year-olds on the other is at most one percentage point. The exception is young men with a migrant background – in this group the young adults say twice as often that they have been to an advice centre (10% v. 5% among the adolescents).

The majority of adolescents and young adults did not visit an advice centre of their own accord. Instead they did so via school. 57% responded, ‘it was an information event organized by the school’. 16% said a general interest in information had motivated them to go, and around the same number (17%) were interested in going because they felt that intercourse was not far off. For some (7%) it had already happened. Another 7% had a somewhat different motivation: they said that contraception had to be re-addressed because of a new relationship, which is why they wanted advice. Some also gave more than one reason for visiting an advice centre (around 1.2 reasons on average).

In detail. Among the girls/young women it has an impact whether they are sexually active or not: if they have had sexual experiences, the ‘yes’ responses are somewhat higher at 8% compared to 4%/5%. Among the male respondents there is not even a hint of such differences.

Compared with the last survey five years ago, the number of adolescents who had contact with an advice centre has dropped (2005: depending on gender and background, between 11% and 14%, in both cases in double digits).

A small percentage of the girls/young women who had not yet been to a gynaecologist had visited an advice centre (with/without a migrant background: 5% and 4% respectively), in other words they were reached with advice via a different avenue.

The percentage of girls/young women who either received contraceptive advice from a gynaecologist or an advice centre breaks down as follows:
Contraceptive Advice by a Doctor or Advice Centre
Girls/young women by age and background

Overall, more than two thirds of the German girls/young women and a good half of the girls/young women with a migrant background have received contraceptive advice from an expert at least once. The different percentages depending on background persist throughout all the phases of life. The difference is already 9 percentage points for the 14/15-year-olds and that gap only increases with increasing age. Among the 18–20-year-olds the difference is greatest at 20 percentage points. It only decreases again somewhat for the 21–25-year-olds, since the figures for the young German women hardly increase anymore (an increase of 4 percentage points over the 18–20-year-olds), whereas there is still a sizable increase of 9 percentage points for the young women from migrant families. The actual decisive variable for these differences is the varying degree of sexual activity, since German girls specifically choose to become sexually active earlier or they are already sexually active, whereas this is not true of girls with a migrant background. As a result, the consultation about contraception is also of greater or lesser relevance.

Ch. 6.1.2, which addressed contraceptive advice from gynaecologists, already mentioned the following fact, namely that for a number of young women with a migrant background there is likely to be the added factor that contraception is not seen as necessary and therefore does not need to be addressed, even though the opportunity was there when they went to a gynaecological consultation: the need is not there in early years because they are supposed to be abstinent, and not in later years either because children then become okay in the steady relationship (marriage) they will have then entered.

If we only look at the sexually active girls/young women, 84% of the German ones and 77% of those from migrant families got expert advice about contraception. To compare again: if we only look at the advice received at a gynaecological consultation, the figures are 82% and 76% respectively.
7  The role of the partner

Even though sex education and advice are largely delivered by other individuals, this chapter seeks to illuminate the place of the relationship more closely, because the partner holds an important position. Not necessarily in general sex education, because this often takes place before the adolescents enter a steady relationship with a member of the opposite sex (nevertheless 12% of the girls and 18% of the boys cite their partner among the most important people for their sex education).

The partner is much more present as a source of information for sexual questions where there is still a need for information. If we only look at those individuals who were in a steady relationship at the time of the survey, then the girlfriend becomes a preferred source of knowledge for the boys (41%) when it comes to filling existing gaps in their knowledge. For the girls the partner (32%) at least comes close to the mother and medical experts (doctors).

Before we address below the extent to which topics like contraception or preventing STIs play a role, we first take a look at the relationships of 14–25-year-olds.

Digression: existence of a relationship and parents’ knowledge of it

Looking at the entire age range, from 14 to 25, around four in ten boys/young men and five in ten girls/young women say they are currently in a relationship. A small percentage are married: 5% of the young women and 2% of the young men were in marital relationships. All the married respondents were 18+. This sample did not contain any married minors.

As is to be expected, the percentage of those in a steady relationship increases with age, but more so for the girls/young women, so that the differences become clearer in adulthood. Nevertheless nowhere near all young people had a steady relationship during the time of the survey: 51% of young men aged 25 said they were in a steady relationship/married, while 64% of their female counterparts said the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>14-15 y.o.</th>
<th>16-17 y.o.</th>
<th>18-20 y.o.</th>
<th>21-25 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys/young men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition there are clear differences depending on background. Among the adolescents, the differences are less pronounced; however, among the young adults both the young women and the young men with migrant backgrounds are less likely to be in a steady relationship than their German counterparts. At the same time twice as many non-German as German young adults were already married (18–25-year-olds: men: 4%/2%, women: 11%/5%).
TABLE: Existence of a relationship; here: ‘yes’ responses by age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>14-15 y.o.</th>
<th>16-17 y.o.</th>
<th>18-20 y.o.</th>
<th>21-25 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female, German background</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, migrant background</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, German background</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male, migrant background</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

Girls/young women of Turkish background are even less likely to be in a steady relationship than the female non-German respondents as a whole.

Almost all of the statements about steady relationships referred to heterosexual relationships. Of the 51% of the girls/young women and the 39% of the boys/young men with a partner, 1 percentage point refers to a same-sex relationship. The group that have a homosexual or bisexual orientation are only a minority within the overall group of respondents. If this group’s statements about relationships are compared to those of the group with a heterosexual orientation, there is no difference based on background for the female respondents. However, among the homosexual (or bisexual) boys/young men, those with a German background are less likely to confirm that they are currently in a steady relationship.

The majority of the relationships had already existed for quite some time, i.e. at least a year. However, this is strongly age-dependent. Among the 14 and 15-year-olds, the relationship was in many cases still quite fresh. Around 30% of the girls/boys said they had had their relationship for ‘a few weeks’, while around 50% said ‘a few months’.

It is a very different story for the 21–25-year-olds. In this age bracket around one third of the young men and almost half of the young women said they had been with their current partner for three years or more (incl. married people). Background was not an important factor here. And among the 18–20-year-olds, half or more were already in a relationship that had lasted for 12 months or more.

An impression about the seriousness and acceptance of the relationship as well about the relationship of the adolescents/young adults to their parents is gained from the responses to the question how the parents see the partner and whether they themselves are accepted in their partner’s home.

Generally speaking, the daughters’ and sons’ partners are accepted by parents (questionnaire response: ‘liked’), and in return the parents of the partners are open about the relationship. At least three quarters of the adolescents/young adults in a relationship report such a positive relationship. However, the parents do not always know about the relationship. On average, 8% of the boys/young men and 6% of the girls/young women said that their parents did not know their partner, and the figures are similar when it comes to whether the partner’s parents were familiar with the respondents.

Among the adolescents the partner is less likely than among the young adults to be known to the parents. However, this is probably connected to the length of the relationship rather than to the age, because there are bigger differences in that regard.
If the relationship had only been in place for a few weeks, around a quarter to a third of cases gave no assessment about the parental attitude, simply because an introduction had not yet been made. If the friendship had been there for a few months, the partner had generally been introduced to the parents. Only 9%/12% of the male/female adolescents/young adults then said they had not yet introduced their partner to their parents or vice versa, that they had not yet been introduced to their partner’s parents.

Girls/young women with a migrant background are much more restrained about introducing their partner to their parents, and they are less likely to have met their partner’s parents. If the relationship has only been in existence for several weeks, there have been no personal introductions in around half of the cases; this is still true for around a third of cases where the relationship has been around for a few months (girls/young women of German background: 7%). Among the male young migrants, meeting the parents takes place later than for their German counterparts, however, if a relationship has been in place for a few months, they are less restrained than the girls/young women with a migrant background.

Only 1% of the boys/young men and 2% of the girls/young women reported that their parents did not like their partner, and in both cases 2% said the same of their partner’s parents regarding themselves. Between 9% and 13% – depending on gender and on whether the response refers to the own parents or their partner’s parents – said ‘so so’.

7.1 Communication about contraception in a relationship

Generally speaking, the partner, if there is one, is one of the most important confidants with whom sexual matters can be discussed. At least four in ten 14–17-year-olds said they spoke about sexual matters in their relationship. And in young adulthood, when the detachment from the home is under way or has been completed, the partner is the first choice. Even among the young women 76% cite the partner as a confidant for sexual matters, and therefore more frequently than the mother or the best friend (young men: 78%). However, is the subject of contraception specifically addressed in the (heterosexual) relationship? That was asked in a specific question.
Communication in the Relationship About Contraception
By background and sexual experience

The result is clear: happily, contraception is something partners in a heterosexual relationship almost always communicate about. This is true for 90% of the sexually active boys/young men and 94% of the girls/young women. Even when no sexual activities have taken place yet, 70% have already addressed the contraceptive issue. Background plays almost no role among the girls/young women, either among the sexually active or the inactive. Among the boys/young men there are clear differences in one of the groups: boys and young men with a migrant background are less likely to discuss contraception in their relationship if they have not yet become sexually active (only 58%; boys/young men of German background: 79%). The sexually experienced boys/young men from migrant families on the other hand are no different from their sexually experienced counterparts from German families.

In detail. Even though the adolescents’ relationships have on average only existed for a shorter period of time than those of the young adults, more than 90% of the 14–17-year-olds who are in a steady relationship and are sexually active confirm that they have talked with their partner about contraception.

Among the respondents with a/aspiring to a high level of education (18+ school-leaving certificate and/or university degree), the level of communication about contraception is above average.

It is helpful for good communication in a relationship if there was an open atmosphere about sexual matters in the home and parents talked about contraception with their sons and daughters. If that was the case, then the number of respondents who spoke with their partner about contraception
increased again, even for the sexually active, to 94% (without parental conversations about sexuality/contraception: 87%/90%). Among the sexually inexperienced there are even differences of 20 percentage points and more, depending on whether sexuality and contraception had been addressed by their parents (‘yes’ responses around the 80%-mark) or not (‘yes’ responses around the 60%-mark).

Almost all the respondents who had talked about contraception with their partner said it had been easy to address (more than 90%). This is also true for the adolescents and young adults with a migrant background. However, those who have not yet become sexually active find it a bit harder. In this group, around one in five did not find it quite so easy to discuss contraception with their partner.

The difficulty with addressing sexual matters is not limited to contraceptive questions. It is an area of conversation that has to be learned and does not come naturally right from the start. When asked quite generally how they feel when sexuality is talked about (without reference to a relationship), only 27% of the girls/young women without sexual intercourse experience answered ‘I don’t have a problem with talking about sexuality’; 38% of the boys/young men said the same. 18%/15% said the opposite, namely that they would prefer not to talk about it at all, while 5%/6% said they would prefer not to comment, which is to be interpreted similarly. The most common response, given by 40% of the male and 50% of the female respondents without sexual intercourse experience, was that this was something they only spoke about with very special confidants: ‘because it’s a very personal subject for me’. There are close connexions to age, because the number relations look very similar for the youngest respondents, the 14 and 15-year-olds.

It is only with increasing age and personal sexual experiences that it becomes largely normal to talk openly about sexuality. Among the 21–25-year-olds, almost two thirds of the young men and a good half of the young women – and approximately equally many among the sexually active – said that they had no problem talking about sexual matters. The figure for those who would prefer not to talk about sexual matters is now under 5%.

Adolescents and young adults from Turkish homes struggle much more than the average with open communication, particularly the girls/young women. This has to do with the fact that they mostly have not yet had sexual experiences. However, even when they have, they do not find this communication as easy as the other respondents.
7.2 Communication about STIs in a relationship

Talking about contraception is taken for granted in almost every relationship. There is not quite so much open communication when it comes to talking with the partner about sexually transmitted infections, STIs, and the potential protective measures.

While around 90% say they talk about contraception, around two thirds of the young men of 18 and over, and three quarters of the young women of German background, said they had talked with their partner about HIV/AIDS or other STIs. The data from the young adults with a migrant background are somewhat different – below the figures of the German respondents by 5 percentage points in each case.

The young women without (hetero)sexual contacts and quite specifically the young Turkish women see less cause to address this subject (sexually inexperienced women: 60%; young Turkish women: 39%).

The number of young men with a homosexual/bisexual orientation is too small to draw conclusions from the statements. Almost all of them said, however, that they had talked about HIV/AIDS and/or other sexually transmitted infections with their male partner (or female partner, because not all of them live in a homosexual relationship). The statements made by the young women with a homosexual/bisexual orientation do not differ from those made by heterosexual women.
8 Media in sexuality education
8.1 The most important media in sexuality education

Sexuality education largely takes place in schools (82%) or private conversations (67%). However, different media, from magazines and brochures to videos and the internet, are all sources. They are very significant when it comes to imparting knowledge about sexuality, reproduction, contraception etc., as the following diagram reveals: it shows the responses of the 14–17-year-olds to the question of what their most important sources of sex education were.

Media as Sources of Sexuality Education
14–17-year-olds by gender

At first glance, two of the nine media depicted stand out for being cited a lot. They vie for top spot depending on gender: for the girls teenage magazines take first place (46%), for the boys it is the internet (50%).

The internet is even more important for boys with a migrant background (57%) than for German boys (47%). To date, there is no difference for the girls depending on background when it comes to the internet as a source of information about sexual matters (38%/39%).

Compared to the internet and teenage magazines, all other options are significantly less common. Most were of equal significance to girls and boys. However, girls are more likely to cite sex-education brochures than boys (16%, compared to 10% of boys), while audio-visual media such as DVDs and videos were cited more often by boys than girls (9%/4%).
8.2 Preferred media to fill knowledge gaps

If, instead of looking at the media that have been used to provide sex education so far, we look at the respondents’ current need for information, i.e. if we look at what media the adolescents and young adults would like to use to acquire knowledge about sexual matters where they feel they have knowledge gaps, then we get some different emphases than for the media used to date.

The girls/young women have a greater affinity to print media here than when they look back.

However, here too the internet is the uncontested frontrunner for both sexes; it is far ahead of all the other media options, making it the winner on the popularity scale. It is followed in spots two to four for women by different types of print media, before TV films show up as the first audio-visual medium on the list of preferences; they make an appearance with a narrow lead of 2 percentage points ahead of another print medium, teenage magazines.

For boys/young men the internet is immediately followed by TV films (the second most popular choice at 23%). They cite all the print media together by 10 percentage points less than the girls/young women. The gap only shrinks to 6 percentage points for teenage magazines. At 15% DVDs are just as relevant to them as magazines (and more important than for the girls/young women, where only 10% cite DVDs).

It is surprising that public lectures and exhibitions still have a certain resonance with both sexes. On average one in ten adolescents/young adults is interested in using this form of information; however, interest in this medium is very much education-dependent: those with higher levels of education...
(18+ school-leaving certificate, degree) cite these two options twice as often as those respondents in educationally challenged segments.

In detail. We chose not to provide a differentiated visual depiction depending on background, since the differences are marginal – mostly 1 to 2 percentage points. Among the girls/young women the biggest difference exists with regard to the value placed on books, which are cited more often by girls/young women with a migrant background, to the tune of 4 percentage points. Among the boys/young men, those of non-German backgrounds demonstrate a strong preference for the internet (plus 6 points compared to German boys/young men) – a fact already seen with regard to the most important sources of their information on sexuality.

The media preferences change with increasing age. The biggest change occurs for youth magazines. They are particularly interesting to the (younger) adolescents, for girls more so than for boys, and among the girls the most avid readers are the German 14 and 15-year-olds (42%). Girls remain interested in this medium for longer than the boys, sometimes even into adulthood, but interest drops significantly from 20, 21 onwards. Among young German women the turn away from this medium is then greater than among the non-German women (21–25-year-olds: now only 11%/15%).

Both sexes, but particularly the girls/young women, become increasingly interested in newspapers and magazines in general, and books also see (somewhat) more interest. Young adults, more so than adolescents, look to the internet to provide them with lacking information (cited between 61% and 67% depending on gender and background).

Free sex-education brochures are popular with girls (33%) and they maintain this prominent position for young women (also 33%). Right from the start, boys are not as interested as girls in this medium (22%); from age 18 onwards their interest also decreases somewhat (18%). It is true for both sexes that they are around twice as likely to cite sex-education brochures as a preference when it comes to gaps in their knowledge about sexual matters rather than the sources that have played a role in their sex education so far (girls/young women: 33% v. 16%, boys/young men: 19% v. 10%). That means there is potential to reach them via this medium.

17% of the male and 12% of the female respondents between 14 and 25 say they are fully sex educated, meaning that they have no further need for information. These percentages do not just come from the adults; even among the 14–17-year-olds 11%/15% of the girls/boys conclude they know everything necessary.
8.3 A focused look: the internet

The internet has already been addressed in several chapters. Since it is developing into one of the main sources of information, the data about it will be presented in a concentrated form and supplemented by further results here.

The significance of the internet in young people’s sexuality education has grown rapidly since the millennium. The increase in significance in the last five years alone has been enormous, as the following diagram demonstrates:

![Internet as Most Important Medium in Sexuality Education](image)

Trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figure reveals something else: the girls are catching up. In 2001 only 3% of the girls cited the internet as a significant source for their sexuality education. During the subsequent surveys, their figures have steadily gone up but the boys were always ahead: in 2005 and 2009 the boys were approximately twice as likely to cite the internet as the girls. Despite another strong increase for the boys – 17 percentage points – the gap between the sexes has decreased to 8 percentage points, because now 39% of girls list the internet as one of the most important sources for their sexuality education.

The internet has not wholly replaced other sources; however, they are becoming increasingly less important. This is particularly true for youth magazines which previously held a prominent position among the media sources (2001: girls 65%, boys 50%; 2014: 46%/30%).
The boys’ use of the internet has now become independent of their level of education, while the girls with a higher level of education are somewhat more likely to use the internet to obtain information about sexual matters than girls with a basic or middling level of education.

What is even more important is that the internet enjoys a high level of acceptance as a source of information, both for adolescents and young adults. It is by far the most popular medium when it comes to getting more information about sexuality, contraception and other topics, and this is true across the board (average citation frequency as ‘preferred medium’ 60% across the entire age spectrum from 14 to 25).

The access question has become almost irrelevant, unlike in the early days. A mere 2% of young people said they did not use the internet.

When explicitly asked if they had ever learned, online, anything about sex that was important to them, 75% of the boys/young men and 68% of the girls/young women said ‘yes’. The fact that this figure is not higher is due to the 14 and 15-year-olds, who stay somewhat below these figures. At 16, the average value is reached.

There are no differences depending on background; however, the educational background has an impact. The higher the level of education, the more likely the respondents are to answer ‘yes’ to the question whether they had learned something of importance online. The span ranges from 56% (basic level of education) to 73% (18+ school-leaving certificate or degree) for the girls/young women and 67% to 81% for the boys/young men. Education has the biggest influence for the girls/young women with a migrant background. The figures here display a gap of 27 percentage points (from 50% to 77%).

However, where did the adolescents and young adults get their information? Where do they search for information? The internet provides a broad spectrum that is informative or interactive in nature.

On average the respondents pick two of the five given answer categories and the answers once again display the different behaviour of girls/young women on the one hand and boys/young men on the other.

**Girls/young women** have consulted three of the five listed information options to the same extent: around one in two use Wikipedia or similar encyclopaedias, sex education or advice sites on the subject, or have found questions and answers in internet forums. One in five has learned something important in a chat. Sex films were a medium of information for 16%.

**Boys/young men.** One in two of them also learned something worthwhile through Wikipedia or other encyclopaedias. The same number said, however, that sex films had provided important information. Far fewer of them sought out explicit sex-education or advice pages. Only one in three were interested in those (girls/women: 50%). The communication option of visiting forums and asking questions personally or reading what others wanted to know seems to have been less interesting to them than their female peers. Chats play a subordinate role, as they did for the girls/women.
Online Sources of Information Used - In Detail

By gender

When differentiated by background, the main difference lies in the fact that girls/young women just like the boys/young men from migrant families are less likely to have obtained their information via explicit sex education and/or advice pages. The difference is 7 percentage points for the female respondents and 9 points for the male respondents. Boys/young men of non-German backgrounds are also less likely to have learned something in forums (minus 6 points compared to German boys/young men); instead, sex films were more frequently an important source of information (plus 8 points).

Sex-education pages are a constant source of information across all age groups. One exception comes from the 14-year-old girls. They are much less likely to use this source (29%; average: 50%). The adolescents/young adults are more likely to find information on sex education/advice sites they consider important the greater their educational background. The same is true for the use of internet forums.

Chats are a more popular source of information for the 14–17-year-olds than for the older respondents. In addition, chats seem to be a source of knowledge for those young people – male adolescents in particular – who have a homosexual or bisexual orientation. 38% of the boys/men in this subgroup cite chats as a source of information important to them (heterosexual boys/men: 21%).

Sex films are cited more and more as a source of information with increasing age. However, even among the 14-year-olds, one in three boys say they learned something important about sexuality when watching sex films. The same is true for 6% of the 14-year-old girls. However, sex films are
not the only source of information. Around half of those who watched sex films also got information from Wikipedia or other encyclopaedias, and the same number visited forums. The percentage of those who visited sex-education or advice sites is lower in this group than in the group where sex films are not a source of information (31% v. 47%). Like the general encyclopaedias, sex films are cited relatively independently of level of education, particularly from girls/young women.

However, with increasing level of education the overall number of sources young people used goes up.
9 Level of knowledge
9.1 Sexually educated? A subjective evaluation

The vast majority of respondents who are now 14–17 years old believe they are educated about sexual matters. Young people from German families (85%/83%) believe this somewhat more than girls and boys with a migrant background (75%/77%), who are at times uncertain how to assess their level of knowledge.

Within the age range investigated, 14–17, the assessment of the respondents’ own level of knowledge changes significantly. The number of young people responding with a clear ‘yes’ to the question whether they considered themselves adequately sex educated grows every year.

In detail. Among the girls and boys of German background this rise occurs relatively quickly and there are hardly any differences in the two groups’ developments.

TABLE: Educated about sexual matters; here:
‘yes’ responses by the 14–17-year-old German girls and boys by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>14 y.o.</th>
<th>15 y.o.</th>
<th>16 y.o.</th>
<th>17 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>German girls</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>German boys</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>92</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
At age 14 around two thirds of German adolescents feel educated about sexuality. One in ten say ‘no, I’m not sufficiently educated about sexuality’ and twice as many (one in five) at this age feel uncertain about how to assess their own level of knowledge. By age 15, the ‘yes’ responses have gone up by a good 10 percentage points. Among the boys the number feeling uncertain has fallen, while the number who still subjectively feel they are not yet sufficiently educated about sexuality remains around 10%. For the girls, this figure has fallen too (from 10% to 4%). At 16, the majority feel they know enough about sexual matters. Those who are sexually active feel they know in (almost) every case (very much above 90%).

The positive self-assessment grows more slowly for young people from migrant backgrounds.

**TABLE: Educated about sexual matters; here: ‘yes’ responses by young people with a migrant background by age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>14 y.o.</th>
<th>15 y.o.</th>
<th>16 y.o.</th>
<th>17 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls with a migrant background</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys with a migrant background</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

Particularly the girls are still very uncertain about their level of education at age 14: a third responded ‘don’t know’ and half that number (16%) said ‘no’, meaning that just 52% consider themselves sexually informed at this age. That is 19 percentage points below the German girls (71%). The greater uncertainty remains with increasing age.

For the 14-year-old boys there is no difference from their German peers, however, they remain more uncertain over the years. Among the 17-year-olds only a few say they do not consider themselves sexually informed (3%; German boys: 2%), however, one in ten does not really know how he should assess his own level of education. Among the 17-year-olds, compared to their German peers fewer feel explicitly that they are sufficiently educated.

Unlike for the German boys, the level of information does not necessarily go up if they are personally sexually active: in this case 86% of the boys with a migrant background feel they know enough (German boys: 95%).

The academic background is a further factor in all four groups that influences how the respondents viewed their own level of sexual education: the higher their level of academic education, the better, subjectively speaking, their level of sexual education. This correlation was most marked for the girls with a migrant background (basic level of education: 65% ‘yes’ responses, higher level: 84%).

Sex-education classes in school and a home where there is an open atmosphere towards conversations about sexual matters are helpful; however, this tends to be less likely for the younger respondents, as was revealed here. Those, who do not have anyone they can talk to about sexual matters (this too is more likely to be true for the younger respondents) were significantly below the average regarding their opinion about their sexual knowledge: in this case only 55%/45% (German/non-German) of the girls consider themselves sex educated, 17%/25% respond with a firm ‘no’. The responses of the boys with a migrant background also correspond to those of the German girls (German boys: 63% ‘yes, I consider myself educated about sexual matters’).
Long-term trend comparison – German 14–17-year-olds

Level of Education in Sexual Matters
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

The long-term trend comparison, which has now been tracked for almost 35 years, exhibits a remarkable constancy regarding the respondents' subjective level of education about sexual matters. Even in 1980, at least the girls had reached the 80% mark for 'yes' responses. This figure has been maintained and has even grown slightly over the years. One exception is the year 2005, with a small downward dip (77%).

The boys' figures used to be similar to those of the girls in the earlier surveys, however, they never fully reached the same levels. The 'dip' in 2005, which the boys exhibited too (a drop to 72%, the lowest value measured to date) is to be classed as an outlier, in light of the further development in subsequent years from today's perspective.

In 2009 the difference was just 1 percentage point. In the current survey it is 2 percentage points. These deviations are not statistically significant so that we can now say the boys have drawn level.

The 2014 survey has the highest figures measured so far, with the girls reaching 85% and the boys reaching 83%.

---

7 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
9.2 Preparation for the first period/first ejaculation

If we take the responses to the question whether they were prepared for their first period/first ejaculation as a reference point for successful sex education at the right time in the respondents’ lives, then we still see very clear differences between the sexes. Three in four girls/young women gave a very clear ‘yes, I knew about it in advance and was prepared’, but only one in two boys/young men said the same. Instead, one third of them had vaguely heard about it in advance, without associating anything specific with it. Twice as many boys/young men as girls/young women were completely unprepared.

Adolescents/young adults with a migrant background were generally somewhat less well informed. Among the girls/young women this fact is primarily demonstrated through their response that they only had a vague idea about their bodily processes instead of exact knowledge. However, at 9% twice as many as their German counterparts (5%) were completely unprepared for their first period.

Among the boys/young men the discrepancy by background with regard to how well informed and prepared they were prior to their first ejaculation is not as great as for the girls’ first period (14-point difference); however, among the boys/young men there is a greater proportion who were not prepared at all. For the boys/young men from migrant families the figure is 18%, i.e. almost one in five.

In detail. With an increasing level of education the likelihood of receiving comprehensive information about menstruation/ejaculation goes up. This fact is demonstrated for both sexes in that the percentages for those who were wholly unprepared were higher for the educationally disadvantaged. If the respondents attend or attended a non-academic secondary school, the figures are 17% for the
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boys/young men and 10% for the girls/young women; if they instead attend/attended an academic secondary school, the figures drop to 10% and 6% respectively.

Turkish adolescents and young adults were less well prepared than the average for children from migrant families. Only 40% of the boys/young men and 52% of the girls/young women confirmed they were well informed and prepared for the event, which is 7 and 11 points respectively below the average for the relevant groups.

Those respondents who lived in homes where sexuality is not openly addressed and who had not (yet) had sex education classes in school were less well informed. In these groups fewer than half of the boys/young men said they had known in advance. Awareness is somewhat more widespread for the girls/young women, but compared to those who can make use of those sources, they are clearly less well informed. The discrepancy is particularly great depending on whether contraception was addressed at home or not: if that was the case 85% said they were prepared for their first period, if not, only 59% said the same.

Long-term trend comparison – German 8 14–17-year-olds

Preparation for the First Period/First Ejaculation
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

Looking at the long-term trend, the girls’ responses prove to be very stable. The constant high level of being well prepared for the first period is maintained in 2014.

---

8 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
The same is true for the boys at a lower level, except that for this group no data was gathered in 1980. Unlike for the girls there was a marked improvement for them between the mid-nineties and 2005 (a gain of 12 percentage points).

For both the girls and boys the current values are not an increase. Instead they lie slightly below those of the previous survey. Whether this proves to be a downward trend cannot yet be determined – the differences are too small for that. In 2005 the boys had their maximum value of 58%. If this is compared to the current figure, there is indeed a slight downward trend.

9.3 Subjectively perceived information deficits

Feeling sufficiently sex educated cannot be equated with not having an interest in more information. When given a list of 17 topics and asked if they would like to know more about any of them or whether they already knew enough about them (whether they were interested in the topic or not), 8 areas stand out where at least a fifth and at most 40% of the adolescents/young adults say they would like to know more. More specifically: at least a fifth of the female adolescents, because comparing the two sexes it quickly becomes clear that they are demonstrably more thirsty for knowledge.

The list here is a colourful mix of different topics. Included in the list of the eight area of most interest is the subject of contraception.
For five of the eight topics at least a third of the female respondents reported they were interested in more information: pregnancy and childbirth, STIs, sexual practices, terminations, and sexual violence. Contraception interested around one in four.

The male adolescents were quite generally less interested in getting more information. Even the two most-cited topics, STIs and sexual practices, only got a 30% response rate, leaving these figures below those of the girls/young women. The topic of pregnancy and childbirth, the topic of most interest to the latter group, only ranks third for the boys (15 percentage points below the female respondents’ figure). There is an equally big difference for the topic of sexual violence/abuse – an area that girls/young women are much more likely to want to know more about than boys (35% v. 19%, a difference of 16 percentage points). However, homosexuality is also a topic that girls/young women are much more likely to want to know more about, namely twice as likely (20% v. 10%) as boys/young men.

However, homosexuality is a topic towards which a large number of adolescents/young adults exhibit a clear lack of interest: ‘that topic doesn’t interest me at all’ said 39% of the boys/young men and 24% of the girls/young women. The topics of terminations (male: 36%, female: 22%) and sexual violence (male: 27%, girls: 13%) also receive a lot of rejection, particularly from the male respondents. Interest in the processes in the female body, e.g. ovulation/menstruation, also varies greatly depending on gender: while almost none of the girls/young women said they were not interested in that at all (2%), more than a quarter of the boys/young men felt this was a topic they did not need to know more about (28%).

The following is a depiction of the results for all the topics on the list by gender and background, above and beyond the gender differences for the eight most-cited topics.
Sexual Topics, Information Deficits – Part 1
Girls/young women by background

Percentages for ‘I would like to know more about that’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Topic</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexually transmitted infections</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual practices</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy, childbirth</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortions</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraception</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage, relationships</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: Look at all the topics listed and indicate whether you would like to know more about them or whether you know enough about them or whether you are not interested in the topic.

Base: 14–25-year-old girls/young women

Fig. 31

Sexual Topics, Information Deficits – Part 2
Girls/young women by background

Percentages for ‘I would like to know more about that’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Topic</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Menstruation, ovulation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affections and love</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles of men and women</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male circumcision</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masturbation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pornography</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual organs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent development</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premarital sex</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: Look at all the topics listed and indicate whether you would like to know more about them or whether you know enough about them or whether you are not interested in the topic.

Base: 14–25-year-old girls/young women

Fig. 32
Girls/young women. It is a consistent fact that the girls/young women with a migrant background are somewhat more interested about the topics than the German girls/young women. This is particularly true for the topics of contraception and menstruation/ovulation – i.e. the two topics that relate to elementary knowledge about sexual matters. The differences vis-à-vis German girls/young women are greatest here at 9 and 7 percentage points respectively. A third topic is affection/love (also 7-point difference). Two further topics that must also count as basic knowledge – sexual organs and adolescent sexual and physical development – also see a gap of 5 percentage points, although they are at the lower end of how often they were cited by both groups.

On average across all the topics, the gap between the German and non-German girls/young women is 4.2 percentage points.

However, there are also topics on the list where the desire for more information is similar. The main one here is sexual practices, about which a third of all girls/young women would like to know more regardless of their background. There is also a similar desire for more information for the topics of masturbation, male circumcision and pornography (at most a difference in all cases of 1 percentage point).

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**Sexual Topics, Information Deficits – Part 1**

**Boys/young men by background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentages for 'I would like to know more about that'</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexually transmitted infections</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual practices</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy, childbirth</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortions</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraception</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage, relationships</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TNS Emnid**

**Question:** Look at all the topics listed and indicate whether you would like to know more about them or whether you know enough about them or whether you are not interested in the topic.

**Base:** 14–25-year-old boys/young men
### Boys/young men

For the male respondents, background only plays a very minor role when it comes to their need for knowledge and the associated information deficits. Generally speaking the boys/young men with a migrant background (tend to) want to know more about different topics somewhat more often. The average difference over all 17 subject areas is just 2.2 percentage points. There is a maximum difference of 4 percentage points between the boys/young men with and without a migrant background. This maximum difference occurred for the topics of sexual practices, affection/love and prostitution.

Male circumcision is a topic of equal interest regardless of background (10%/11%). The figures are somewhat deceptive insofar as the boys/young men with a migrant background are more likely to say they knew enough about it (55%), while the majority of German boys/young men said ‘this topic doesn’t interest me at all’ (52%). However, even within the group of respondents with foreign roots there are differences in the levels of interest/lack of interest. On average around one third of boys/young men with migrant roots said that they were not interested in the topic (34%), but among the young Turks only 8% claim that position. However, there is nonetheless an increased demand for information: 83% say they are sufficiently well informed.

Of course the interest in learning more about sexual topics is age-dependent. The topic of adolescent physical and sexual development interests 14–17-year-olds (15%) more than the young adults 18+ (8%). The former group would also like to know more about love and affection (24% v. 15%), as well as about masturbation (19% v. 10%) – true for both girls and boys.
Only one in three girls and one in four boys between 14 and 17 feel they need to know more about the important topic of contraception (32%/25%); within this group it is the 14 and 15-year-olds in particular (39%/30%) as they are about to become sexually active or have only just become so. Contraception still remains a topic among young adults, however (‘I’d like to know more’: 20%/15%).

Contraception is not an isolated field among the topics here: when comparing the 14–17-year-olds with the 18–25-year-olds, the percentages wanting more information are often similar. STIs remain a topic for which there is a need for information well into adulthood (‘would like to know more about it’: 14–17-year-olds: 36%; 18–25-year-olds: 33%). 26% of 18–25-year-olds would also like to know more about sexual violence (14–17-year-olds: 28%).

In contrast, young men over the age of 18 exhibit an increasing interest in the topic ‘pregnancy and childbirth’, whereupon they discover gaps in their knowledge they would like to fill (26% compared to 18% among 14–17-year-olds). There are no such differences among the female respondents: the topic of pregnancy and childbirth is one they concern themselves with and would like to know more about from a young age and the same is true for the 18–25-year-old women.

Only the young adults were asked about their knowledge/need for information about a further topic, namely: ‘sexual dysfunction such as erectile problems or vaginal dryness’. This is an area many 18–25-year-olds would like to know more about. If a ranking were to be produced for just this age group, determining where there is the greatest demand for information, this topic would be quite high up, both among the young women (37%) and the young men (30%).
Long-term trend comparison –German 14–17-year-olds

Sexual Topics, Information Deficits – Selection
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

The graphs immediately provide a convincing illustration that the level of knowledge about sexual matters has changed among adolescents. It would appear that the sexuality-education efforts of the past 35 years are bearing fruit, because for all topics that were surveyed in 1980 and that we now have comparison data for, the girls’ and boys’ percentages – of those saying they do not yet feel sufficiently informed and would like to know more about the individual topics – have decreased substantially. One exception: the number of girls wanting to know more about pregnancy and childbirth is the same as in 1980.

Topics that one in two 14–17-year-olds were still unsure about 35 years ago have seen a drop of at least 12 percentage points and at times of more than 20 points from the original values. It is particularly pleasing that the topic of contraception stands out positively in this regard, because the figures for girls and boys who did not yet feel sufficiently informed about this topic have fallen by 21 and 22 percentage points respectively from 50% and 46%.

The biggest numerical change occurred for the topic ‘marriage and other types of relationships’. Only 19%/16% of girls and boys today do not feel well enough informed about this topic. In 1980 the corresponding figures were 46% and 40%.

9 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
9.4 Knowledge of the free availability of the contraceptive pill for young people up to age 19

The group this topic primarily affects – namely sexually active girls and young women between the ages of 14 and 19 – has shown itself to be very well informed about the regulation that statutory health funds will pay for the contraceptive pill for young people until their 20th birthday. 90% of the girls/young women from German families and 84% of the girls/young women with a migrant background respond to this question in the affirmative – therefore background only plays a secondary role when it comes to level of awareness. The fact that the number of girls/young women from migrant families is somewhat lower could be because girls/young women with a migrant background have a lower affinity to the contraceptive pill than German girls/young women.

The situation is different for those who have not yet had their own sexual experiences. 60% of girls/young women of German background know about the free availability of the contraceptive pill, even if they do not yet have a need for it; the same is true for only 47% of girls/young women from families with a migrant history.

The relatively large proportion among the girls/young women with migrant backgrounds who have not yet had sexual intercourse is the reason why the difference between the total figures looks so great when comparing girls/young women with and without a migrant background.
Boys/young men of the same age are much less well informed about the free availability of the contraceptive pill for young people. Even the sexually active among them do not necessarily know about this. At 56% only around half of the boys/young men of German background are aware; boys/young men from migrant families are much less well informed – in this group, only 42%, i.e. a minority, are informed about this. Anticipating the next chapter, this is probably the result of the different relationship patterns of the two groups (boys/young men with a migrant background are less steady in their relationships, with more changes; only a small percentage are in a steady relationship).

Of those without sexual experience, the majority of boys/young men from German families are also unaware about the free availability of the contraceptive pill. Only three in ten answer the relevant question in the affirmative, which is no different from the sexually inexperienced boys/young men from a non-German background.

The sexes differ in this regard: while the level of awareness among those not yet sexually active differs depending on background, the biggest differences by background among the boys/young men are exhibited among the sexually experienced.

**In detail.** With increasing age there is also growing awareness that health insurance funds pay for the contraceptive pill for young people. This is most probably associated with the increase in sexual activity among the higher age groups. Among the 14-year-old girls (the majority of whom have not yet had sexual intercourse) 46% of the German girls and 29% of the girls with a migrant background have heard of this provision. By age 15 it is two in three (without a migrant background) and half (with a migrant background). From age 16 onwards the percentage among the German girls/young women rises to more than 80%. There is no consistent picture for the girls/young women with a migrant background: the percentages fluctuate between 58% and 77%.

Girls and young women who have already been to a gynaecological practice are largely aware about the free availability of the contraceptive pill (83%/70%, not yet been to a gynaecologist: 50%/36%). The fact that the figures are so much higher in the first case is also associated with the respondents’ age and their sexual activity, because often it is the desire for contraception that causes young women to see a gynaecologist. This is particularly true for German girls/young women (cf. ch. 6.1), which also partially explains the different quotas depending on background, because girls/young women with a migrant background are more likely to seek out a gynaecologist for other reasons.

Girls and young women who had their first sexual experiences at 14 or younger are no less well informed about the free availability of the contraceptive pill than others. The data does not reveal when they found out about this; however, the vast majority see a gynaecologist to obtain more information at the latest shortly after their first sexual contacts.
Comparing the data of the past 20 years – the question about the respondents’ knowledge of the free availability of the contraceptive pill for the under-20s was asked for the first time in 1996 – the level of awareness among the girls of German citizenship/background has seen little change. Among the girls who are already sexually experienced, the maximum value achieved five years ago could be maintained (plus 1 percentage point). For this group there is even a slight increase over the 20-year period.

The current total of 69% is 2 points lower than it was for the last survey in 2009; however, the initial impression of a slight downward trend in awareness needs to be seen in perspective. When considering the total figures, the ratio between the sexually experienced (who are usually well informed) and the sexually inexperienced (who are less well informed) should be considered. Since there is currently a trend towards becoming sexually active slightly later (cf. ch. 11.3), the number of sexually inexperienced respondents is somewhat higher in the most recent survey, which therefore has an impact on the overall figure. The figure currently measured is still slightly higher than those of most other survey dates.

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10 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
Girls/young women and boys/young men do not just differ in their awareness of the free availability of the contraceptive pill to young people, they also differ in their sources for this information if they know about it. Among the female respondents more than one in two said a doctor informed them, more than one in three (also) cited her parents – in this case largely to be equated with the mother. The father is hardly ever cited without the mother also being mentioned. School only comes third in the ranking. The partner plays almost no role (1%).

Boys/young men hardly ever received information about the free availability of the contraceptive pill from a doctor. They primarily obtain their knowledge of this free availability from school. School (cited by 54%) is as important a source of information for them as doctors are for girls/young women (55%). One in four learned about it from their parents; they have a lesser role as a source of information for them than for girls/young women. When the information is passed on in the home, it is largely via the mother for the boys/young men too. However, the partner has the same significance for boys/young men as the parents do for girls/young women, as she is also cited by every fourth male respondent. In addition the media are a more relevant source of information here than for girls/young women. TV/radio/newspapers are cited by 8%, therefore twice as often as by the female respondents. They are also much more likely to refer to the internet as a source of information, citing it 16% of the time, compared to 7%.
Knowledge of Free Availability of the Contraceptive Pill - Sources
14–19-year-olds by background

When the data is also looked at by background, the responses given by the girls/young women only really differ significantly in one aspect: girls/young women with a migrant background are much less likely to have received their information at home (22% v. 42% for German girls/young women). Instead, they are more likely to cite school as a source of information (plus 5 percentage points). Doctors remain the central source of information for both groups.

Boys/young men with a migrant background are also less likely to have heard about the free availability of the contraceptive pill at home. However, the difference to their German peers is not as great as among the female respondents, since the German boys/young men are also less likely to have been informed about this by their parents. The biggest difference between the boys/young men with and without a migrant background lies in the role of the partner: she is cited by 10 percentage points less often by boys/young men with a migrant background.

In detail. 65% of girls/young women who have been to a gynaecologist say this medical professional was the source of their knowledge. Those who have not been to a consultation are most likely to have found out from school (50%, therefore 20 percentage points more than the average) and more likely to have heard from a good female friend (33%, 8 percentage points more) about the free availability of the contraceptive pill for young people. They did not find out from their parents: the responses citing the mother or the father are below average.

For the 14 and 15-year-olds of both sexes school is the main source of information; for the girls/young women it is increasingly replaced by the gynaecologist. For the boys/young men school remains the main source of information, but with increasing age the (now present) partner becomes more significant.
9.5 Knowledge of the ‘morning after pill’

The respondents are already very well informed about the free availability of the contraceptive pill for young people. This is even more true for the level of awareness for the ‘morning after pill’ as an option for emergency contraception. On average, 93% of all 14–25-year-old girls and young women said they knew about this pill. The figure is even higher for those for whom this knowledge is particularly important: the sexually active. In this group the level of awareness is excellent, regardless of background (German background: 98%, migrant background 96%, total average: 97%).

### Knowledge of the ‘Morning After pill’
Girls/young women by background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually inexperienced</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually experienced</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** If there was a contraceptive mishap, or after unprotected sex, there is the option of using emergency contraception, the ‘morning after pill’ [... more detailed explanation] Were you aware such a pill existed?

**Base:** 14–25-year-old girls and young women

If it is even possible to raise the level of awareness, then only among those girls/young women who have not yet become sexually active. 86% of girls/young women from German families confirm their awareness of the ‘morning after pill’ in this case; at 76% the figure is slightly lower for the girls/young women with a migrant background.

**In detail.** Increasing in line with the growing number of sexually experienced respondents is the knowledge of the ‘morning after pill’ with age. By 14 few girls have become sexually active, but (already) two in three girls are aware of the ‘morning after pill’. Among the 15-year-olds this figure has increased to 84%; from 16 onwards the figure rises to more than 90%. If an additional distinction is made by background, we can see that awareness is already very widespread among the German girls, even at a young age: 73% of 14-year-olds said they knew about the ‘morning after pill’. It is girls from migrant families who often lack knowledge of the possibility of emergency contraception;
only 57% of 14-year-olds in this group have this knowledge and even with increasing age this figure rises more slowly compared to their German counterparts. Here too we must take into account that girls of non-German backgrounds become sexually active later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE: Knowledge of the ‘morning after pill’ among 14–17-year-old girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant background</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

Among the girls/young women from German families even the educationally disadvantaged members of society are very well informed about the ‘morning after pill’ (also over 90%). However, for the girls/young women with a migrant background, educational background has an impact. 75% of girls/young women who attend/have attended a non-academic secondary school say they are aware of this option; the same is true for 86% of those with moderate educational attainments and 92% of respondents who have attended an academic secondary school.

The level of awareness is below average for the young female Turkish respondents (76%) and particularly so for the very religious Muslim girls/young women (68%).

Girls/young women from migrant families who have already seen a gynaecologist are generally aware of the option of emergency contraception by way of the ‘morning after pill’ (92%; comparison group girls/young women from German families: 97%).

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean the gynaecologist was the source for the information that there is the option of emergency contraception through the ‘morning after pill’. This is confirmed by the responses to the question about where the girls/young women heard about the ‘morning after pill’.

The statements about the sources of information are also interesting compared to those regarding the option of the free availability of the contraceptive pill. They make it clear that the dissemination of information takes place via different avenues.
Morning After Pill/Free Availability of the Contraceptive Pill
Comparison of the Sources of Information

Girls/young women

Medical experts do not have the central function as sources of information, as they do when it comes to the free availability of the contraceptive pill to young people. Parents are also less involved in providing this information. Instead it is schools that play the biggest role here: 44% of girls/young women said that they heard about the ‘morning after pill’ for the first time in class. The best friend also becomes a more important source of information with regards to the ‘morning after pill’ (cited by 8 percentage points more than for the free availability of the contraceptive pill).

It also stands out that the media are all cited more often as a source of information. When it comes to the ‘morning after pill’, they have a much greater significance as a source of information than they do regarding the free availability of the contraceptive pill: sex-education brochures are cited by 17% of respondents (comparison re free availability of the pill for young people: 8%), the internet by 15% (comparison: 7%) and the traditional media of television, radio and newspapers by 18% (comparison: 4%).

By comparison, the differences between girls/young women with and without a migrant background are relatively small, apart from the fact that the home once again does not play so large a role in imparting knowledge for young migrant women.

The most significant deviation in addition to the differing significance of the parents relates to sex education brochures: girls/young women of German background cite them by 6 percentage points more often as a source of information about the ‘morning after pill’ than by girls/young women from homes with a migrant background (18% v. 12%).
In detail. School as a source of knowledge about the ‘morning after pill’ has a particularly high significance for the 14 and 15-year-olds; it is cited by 51% in this age group. However, unlike for the question about the sources of information about the free availability of the contraceptive pill for young people, school also remains the most-cited source of information among the older respondents.

The number of respondents who were informed about the ‘morning after pill’ during a gynaecological consultation increases with age. Doctors become the second-most important source of information about the ‘morning after pill’, without fully replacing school in their significance.

Sex-education brochures as a very specific print medium increase in significance as a source of information over the years. Among the girls/young women of German background this is clearly the case: 10% of the 14 and 15-year-olds cite this source of information, while the same is true for 22% of the 21–25-year-olds. If the girls/young women come from families with a migrant background, there is no such increase. However, the number of respondents saying that sex-education brochures were their source of information about the ‘morning after pill’ goes up substantially when comparing the age groups 14/15 and 16/17: from 5% to 13%. However, in the older age groups the figures stabilize at this level.

The internet is also cited more often with increasing age. The young women with a migrant background are particularly likely to discover this medium a source of information with increasing age: 9% of 14–17-year-old girls from migrant families refer to it on average, but 19% of the young women aged 18–25 do so. Other media (TV, radio and print collectively in one group) are cited most often by the oldest respondents (21–25-year-olds).
10 Young people’s experiences of their own body

10.1 Experience of the body

The onset of puberty is not just exhibited through sexual maturity (first menstruation/first ejaculation). It starts with external physical changes during the transition from childhood to adulthood: the voice breaks, body hair grows, breasts develop, testicles grow and the entire body shape changes. Girls and boys cannot avoid confronting these developments, not least with regard to existing social norms about the perfect body, to which they have to develop their own attitude.

Therefore the questions about sexual experiences were preceded by a set of questions about the respondents’ awareness of their own bodies. The survey looked exclusively at their subjective understanding and deliberately avoided an objectification of the perceptions (e.g. BMI or the like), because it is primarily the *subjective* attitude to our own body that affects how we deal confidently with our own bodies and how we confront norms that relate to appearance.

### Respondents’ Attitude to Their Own Body

**By gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Top 2 values*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel happy with my body</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>'agree completely' + 'mostly agree'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel too thin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel too fat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like styling myself</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay attention to keeping fit</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*5-tier scale from ‘agree completely’ to ‘disagree completely’ in %

At first glance the graph would suggest that the male and female respondents have quite a different attitude to their bodies. The majority of boys/young men are happy with their appearance. Almost three in four of them say as much. Only one in five has complaints about his appearance, and ‘too thin’ is perceived to be a problem as often as ‘too fat’. Physical fitness is important: three quarters of the male respondents said they paid attention to keeping fit. Grooming is not as important to them, even though half of the respondents agreed with the statement ‘I like styling myself’.

The responses given by the girls/young women reveal a different picture. It appears to be harder for them to accept their body the way it is. Only one in two of the female respondents picked ‘agree
completely’ or ‘mostly agree’ for the statement ‘I feel happy with my body’. One in three was unhappy with her weight, though most of them (28%) considered themselves overweight (‘too thin’: 4%). In addition they care more about styling (71%) than their male counterparts (54%). The majority of girls/young women also care about physical fitness (65%) but this figure does not quite match that of the boys/young men (74%).

One might think that the attitude to one’s body would change over the course of puberty and upon reaching adulthood, that the increasing experience with this new body would produce a more relaxed attitude and that individual physical characteristics would be accepted to a greater degree. That, however, is only true to a very limited extent. The assessments of the adolescents and young adults respectively to the six aspects relating to their relationship to their own body hardly differ. The norm of the ‘perfect body’ even seems to gain more traction with increasing age: among the 18–25-year-old women 30% feel they are ‘too fat’; that is an increase of 5 percentage points compared to the 14–17-year-old girls. Coupled with that, the proportion who disagree completely or mostly disagree with this statement drops by 6 percentage points with age. Similar tendencies also exist among the boys/young men. The statement ‘I am happy with my body’ is supported somewhat more by the boys than by the young adults 18+ (75% v. 70%). Boys also care more about personal styling (58% v. 52%) and the importance of fitness is greatest among the 16/17-year-olds (top two values: 81%/80%).

Compared to the gender differences for the top two values, the differences depending on background are marginal when it comes to how happy the respondents were with their own body or what perceived flaws their body had. The differences are maximally 2 percentage points for the girls/young women (statement ‘I feel too fat’), and also maximally 2 percentage points for the boys/young men (statement ‘I feel too thin’). The differences are therefore not statistically significant.

However, there are different attitudes to styling and fitness among the male respondents, depending on their background. Both of these things are more important to boys/young men with a migrant background than to German boys/young men. ‘I pay attention to keeping fit’ was emphasized by 80% of the former group, compared to 72% of those of German background. There are even greater differences between the boys/young men with a migrant background and those with a German background. Those with migrant roots have a stronger preference for experimenting with their appearance and getting closer to their subjective ideal through styling (64% v. 50% for the German boys/young men). Among the girls/young women the attitudes hardly differ in this area too (differences: 4/3 percentage points).

Since girls/young women struggle with their appearance quite a lot more often and are not happy with their bodies as much as boys/young men, they are also more open (susceptible?) to the idea of getting closer to their ideal through surgical measures.
‘If I had the opportunity, I would have cosmetic surgery’ – 20% of German girls/young women and 25% of girls/young women with a migrant background support this statement, and half of these – i.e. around one in ten – pick the option ‘agree completely’. This subgroup is evidently so dissatisfied with the status quo that they are quite convinced of the necessity of surgical cosmetic corrections. Agreement is somewhat higher among young women than among the 14–17-year-olds (plus 3 percentage points, regardless of background).

However, there is also the opposite group that are firmly against surgical measures: every second German girl/young woman and 43% of the female respondents with a migrant background chose the lowest category of the five-tier scale that expresses the strongest rejection (‘disagree completely’).

All things considered, it is the case that girls/young women with a migrant background feel more positively about the notion of improving their appearance through surgical corrections than German girls/young women, because they are more likely to choose the category that signals the most agreement and less likely to choose the category signalling the most disagreement.

Among the boys/young men the opinion is much more clearly hostile towards cosmetic surgery, irrespective of background. Four in five boys/young men are in no way interested in helping out their appearance in a surgical manner, rejecting this statement categorically. Merely a tiny minority of 1%/3% expresses serious interest in this idea.

**In detail.** If we go into more detail with regard to age and background, we can see some different developments from adolescence to adulthood. The most significant one affects the girls/young women with a migrant background: they develop a positive attitude to their own body with increasing age. 41% of the 14–17-year-olds agree with the statement ‘I am happy with my body’, but 49% of
the 18–25-year-olds say the same. This difference of 8 percentage points is largely the result of the different attitude of the 14 and 15-year-olds. At this age girls from migrant families are less happy with their bodies – only 36% agree with the above statement, compared to 48% of German girls of the same age. There is therefore almost no difference between the responses of the German adolescents and the German young women (49%/47%).

The German female respondents in turn were most likely to put an added emphasis on their weight with increasing age: the number of young women considering themselves 'too fat' was 5 percentage points higher than for the girls. This trend also exists for the girls/young women with a migrant background (plus 4 points) and the boys/young men with a migrant background (plus 6 points). Only the German boys/young men seem unaffected by this thought process (plus 1 point).

The great importance attached to physical fitness declines somewhat among the German boys/young men in adulthood (minus 5 percentage points compared to the adolescents). Among the young men with a migrant background this aspect retains its high importance unchanged.

The educational background also has some influence on the respondents' attitude to their body, but not in every regard. The fitness concept is all the more important for adolescents/young adults the higher the educational group they belong to. The difference between respondents from educationally disadvantaged groups (special-needs school, non-academic secondary school) on the one hand and those with an 18+ school-leaving certificate and college students on the other is 12 percentage points for the male respondents and 10 percentage points for the female respondents. The more highly educated members of both sexes are also more likely to say they are happy with their own body.

An open atmosphere towards sexual topics in the home seems to be helpful in giving young people a positive attitude to their own body. Both the female and male respondents from homes with such an open attitude were 10 percentage points more likely to say 'I feel happy with my body'; at the same time the tendency of girls/young women to consider cosmetic surgery is less strong (minus 9/6 percentage points – German/non-German background – compared to the group of respondents from homes where sexuality is not discussed between parents and children).

If adolescents or young adults are not very happy with their bodies, this is largely correlated with the subjective sense of being too fat. Almost three quarters of the girls/young women who reject the statement 'I feel happy with my body' as inapplicable ('mostly disagree'/disagree completely') classed themselves as 'too fat' (73%); for the boys/young men it is approximately half (53%). Even among the group who said 'maybe' in response to the statement 'I feel happy with my body' 38%/25% (female/male) said they were 'too fat' – an above average number. Those who are happy with their bodies, either completely or mostly, rarely feel they are too fat (maximally 7%). The respondents who are not happy with their bodies are only half as likely to agree with the statement that they paid attention to keeping fit.
Little has changed regarding the attractiveness of getting closer to the beauty ideal through surgical methods in the past ten years. We can say for German girls that for a while (2009) they had a stronger tendency to reject such steps; however, the current figures are almost exactly what they were in 2005.

Among the girls with a migrant background the slight decrease in the rigorous rejection of cosmetic surgery that occurred between 2005 and 2009 has been confirmed with the current figures. The responses of agreement (top 2 values) are at the same level for the entire timespan.
10.2 Sexual maturity: first period/first ejaculation

Time of the First Period/Ejaculation
14–17-year-olds by background

Young people these days reach sexual maturity early. The 14–17-year-olds with a migrant background cite younger ages than those of German background.

The girls’ responses can be broken down roughly into thirds: one third were 12 when they had their first period, another third were 13. The final third are to be divided: a good half were 11 or younger, the others were 14 or older. It is very much the exception (3%) for 14–17-year-old girls not to have had their first period. This response was given almost exclusively by 14-year-olds.

Among the girls from families with a migrant history one in five say they were 11 or younger. That is somewhat more than for the German girls (plus 5 percentage points).

The boys are not as young when they experience their first ejaculation. The first ejaculation occurs later among the German boys in particular. We can tell that from the smaller number who already had their first ejaculation at age 11 or younger or at age 12, and from the percentage of boys who had not yet experienced an ejaculation. At 11% the figure is almost four times that of the girls who have not yet experienced their first period and it is distributed across all the age groups. Although the focus for the boys is also among the 14-year-olds, there are also a few respondents among the 15, 16 and 17-year-olds who said they had not yet ejaculated.

The boys from families with a migrant history are as likely as the non-German girls to give quite a young age. However, the number of boys in this group who have not yet ejaculated is more than twice what the equivalent figure is for the girls. Quite generally, the ages for the non-German boys are slightly shifted to an older age.
Long-term trend comparison – 14–17-year-old German girls

First Period Aged 11 or 12
Long-term trend, German girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>11 y.o. or younger</th>
<th>12 years old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother generation 1980</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The long-term trend illustrates very well how much the first period has come earlier and earlier. In the first survey in 1980, 8% of the girls said they were 11 or younger when they had their first period, a further 27% said they were 12 (combined this is around a third of the girls who were 14–17 at the time), meaning that the percentage of girls who were 11 or younger when they had their first period has doubled (now: 15%). The number of girls who were 12 has also gone up (now: 31%) so that around half of the 14–17-year-old girls (46%) were under the age of 13 when they had their first period.

If we also look at the data from the mothers’ generation – in 1980 they too gave information about the age they were when they had their first period– it becomes even clearer how huge the changes of the past decades have been. Only a very small percentage (4%) of the mothers of the girls surveyed in 1980 were 11 or younger when they had their first period – half as many as the girls in 1980. 13% said they were 12 years old (total: 17%).

The current figures confirm the figures from the previous survey five years ago and also reveal a further trend towards an ever-decreasing age.

The 14-year-old girls are the only group where there is now still a noteworthy percentage who have not yet had their first period (9%). Among the 15-year-olds it is merely 1% and for the older girls it is quite exceptional (in each case below 0.5%).

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11 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
In detail. Even if the early occurrence of sexual maturity cannot be equated one-to-one with early sexual activity, a certain correlation cannot be denied. Among the girls who were 14 or younger when they experienced sexual intercourse for the first time, 30% said they were 11 or younger when they had their first period. If girls became sexually active for the first time at 15, 16 or 17, the corresponding percentage who had a very early first period is at most 16%, i.e. half the number. The older the girls were when they had sexual intercourse for the first time, the higher too the average age of the first period. There are similar correlations among the boys.

The 18–25-year-olds were not explicitly asked about the age of their first period/first ejaculation, since the time it happened will be so far in the past for them that the data will be more uncertain. In the context of another question (preparation for the first period/first ejaculation) it was noted for this group if they had not yet had their first period/first ejaculation. According to the respondents’ figures, this was the case for less than 0.5% of the young women and 1% of the young men 18+.
11 Experiences in the sexual sphere

11.1 The sexually inexperienced and their reasons

11.1.1 No contact yet to the opposite sex

Around one in ten adolescents and young adults between the ages of 14 and 25 have not yet become sexually active and have not yet shared any physical experiences with the opposite sex (9%). However, the figure relating to the entire age spectrum says little, because a considerable development takes place during this twelve-year span.

Among the 14-year-olds almost half are completely sexually inexperienced in their (sexual) contact with the opposite sex. That changes relatively quickly in subsequent years: among those who have turned 18, the percentage of respondents who have not yet had any physical contact to the opposite sex is, at an average of 5%, in the minority.

There are virtually no differences between the sexes. However, the situation changes when we look at an additional characteristic, namely background. Then we can see that the statement about the gender comparison is correct for German adolescents and that the figures are similar for young men with and without a migrant background. However, the young women of non-German background do not fit into this pattern: they are much more reserved about any kind of physical contact to the opposite sex than the other three groups.
Girls with a migrant background wait until they are older than their German peers before they experience their first physical contact with the opposite sex. Among the 14-year-olds the percentage that have had such an experience is around a third lower than among the German girls of the same age; the majority still say that no physical contact has taken place. Although the number of girls with a migrant background who have not had such contact to the opposite sex drops with increasing age as well, it happens in a delayed manner. At age 18, 16% still have not had (sexual) experiences. The percentage only drops to single digits (8%) when the non-German women reach the age of 20.

**In detail.** Among the girls from migrant families the young Turkish girls prove to be particularly reticent. That much is evidenced from the average across all age groups: on average, 17% of the girls/young women with a migrant history stated they had not yet exchanged physical intimacies with the opposite sex; for the girls/young women from Turkish families the figure is 33% – twice as high (German girls/young women: 7%).

The figures are also comparatively high for other Muslim girls/young women (34%). If there is a close tie to this religion, the girls/young women exhibit even greater restraint: around half of the 14–25-year-old Muslim girls/young women have had no contact to the opposite sex (48%).

The strength of the religious tie also seems to influence the extent of restraint among the respondents in general. If we distinguish Catholic and Protestant girls/young women by the strength of their religious tie, those who feel closely connected to their religion are twice as likely to say they have not had relations with the opposite sex than those with only loose ties.
11.1.2 Reasons for complete abstinence

For this question it makes sense to focus on the responses of the adolescents, because they are particularly likely to exhibit complete abstinence when it comes to physical contact with the opposite sex.

When asked about the reasons for their restraint, the 14–17-year-olds give at least two reasons on average, and they almost always include ‘absence of the right partner’ (57%). For German girls this is the main reason – almost two thirds of them cited it. Almost four in ten of the girls also said their own shyness was the reason no physical contact had taken place yet (37%). These two reasons are of fairly equal importance for the German boys (59%/50%), whereas the focus for the non-German boys is more clearly on the absence of the right partner (52%, ‘too shy’ 30%).

The justification ‘I’m still too young for that’ is also one of the main arguments, however, more for the 14 and 15-year-olds. Few aged 16 and older use it, at least among the German adolescents and boys from migrant families.

The responses given by girls from migrant families differ. Although the absence of the right partner and reticence because of shyness are among the most-cited answers for them too, further reasons are added to the mix. These girls are particularly likely to consider themselves too young – at 47% they give this answer as often as the lack of the right partner (48%). The reason that they are scared their parents could find out is cited similarly often as their own shyness (32% v. ‘too shy’ 36%).
The change in argumentation when comparing the answers of the 14–17-year-old girls with those of the 18–25-year-old young women is interesting. In contrast to the young people of German background and the boys of non-German background, for whom few over the age of 17 have not yet had physical contact to the opposite sex, the numbers of girls/young women with a migrant background permit a comparison (14–17-year-olds: n=197, 18–25-year-olds: n=42).

Those who are reserved about engaging in physical contact after reaching the age of 18 very much use morality-based arguments. 60% of the 18–25-year-olds said ‘I don’t think it’s right before marriage’, three times as many as among the 14–17-year-olds. The more general ‘I think it’s immoral’ is also used as an argument twice as often and the statement ‘I have to stand on my own two feet first’ gains traction. At the same time the arguments ‘I’m too young’ and ‘I’m too shy’ become less important. However, the fear of the parents remains relatively high.

### Reasons for Complete Abstinence

**Comparison girls/young women of non-German background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>14-17-year-olds</th>
<th>18-25-year-olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Still too young</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too shy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of parents</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not right before marriage</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s immoral</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to stand on my own two feet first</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

**In detail.** Across the entire age spectrum, from 14 to 25, there are indications of parental pressure among the abstinent girls, particularly among the Turkish girls/young women (43%) and Muslim girls/young women (42%). These two groups are similarly affected by an internalized expectation of premarital abstinence. Parental pressure and ‘I don’t think it’s right before marriage’ are the two most commonly chosen reasons when asking Turkish girls/young women and Muslim girls/young women about their restraint (43% and 47%).

For German adolescents, fear of the parents is no reason for restraint from physical contact with the opposite sex (6%/5%). And moral considerations are also alien to the adolescents/young adults from German homes (14–25-year-olds in total: ‘not right before marriage’ 2%, ‘think it’s immoral’ 1%). Apart from the reasons already discussed, the fear of being clumsy is much more relevant to them (24%).
11.2 Forms of sexual contact

To explain upfront: all the following discussion about sexual contact refers to heterosexual contact. This type of contact stood and stands in the foreground of the Youth Sexuality study because the results are primarily there to obtain insights for optimizing young people’s contraceptive behaviour – that is the legal remit of the Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung. Same-sex sexual contact has been given a separate chapter (ch. 11.4).

The expanded age spectrum in this study, from 14 to 25 years, allows us to get a good reflection of young people’s entry into sexual activity. First experiences with kissing have often taken place at a very young age. At 14, the majority of girls and boys have already kissed someone of the opposite sex, though anything more than that is still confined to a minority. On the flipside, there are only a very few young women and men at age 25 who have had no contact to the opposite sex. The 25-year-olds have engaged in many different types of sexual activities, generally speaking all the way to intercourse (93%).

The fact that the percentage for 25-year-olds who have had sexual intercourse is not higher is because of the young women with a migrant background, particularly the young Turkish women. They differ markedly in their sexual behaviour from their peers.

11.2.1 Sexual experiences without intercourse

Generally speaking kissing is the first and definitely the most common form of physical affection between girls/young women and boys/young men. Among the 14–17-year-olds, the percentage who have kissed someone is already quite high at an average of 74%. At 17, around 90% have already kissed someone and two thirds also have experience with petting – only the girls from migrant families exhibit more restraint in all forms of physical contact (across the entire age spectrum).

As is to be expected, age is a powerful influencing factor here. However, when conducting a detailed comparison between the age groups – where the development can be followed properly – it makes sense to distinguish by gender and background because both factors influence behaviour.

The following figures only depict three different types of petting to make them clearer. Kissing is merely referred to in the text. Experiences with sexual intercourse have been given their own chapter (ch. 11.3).
Experiences with Petting

Girls/young women by background

There are clear differences between girls/young women from German families and from migrant families, because girls/young women of non-German background exhibit greater restraint when it comes to physical contact to the opposite sex in every regard. Comparing the four age groups, there is by and large a difference of at least 10 percentage points between the two groups, sometimes substantially more, when looking at the various different forms of physical contact.

The behavioural differences are particularly great among the 18–20-year-olds. At this age young German women have largely completed their entry into a sexually active life: 97% have kissed and the different types of petting are practised by (almost) 80–90%; at 87% the vast majority have also had sexual intercourse.

Although the majority of young women among the 18–20-year-olds (86%) with a migrant background have also had experience with kissing, all other forms of sexual contact are less common. Touching breasts and touching female genitals is known to 69% and 60% respectively in the 18–20 age group – that more or less corresponds to the distribution among the 16–17-year-old German girls. Women touching male genitals is even less widespread; the percentages remain around 26 percentage points behind those of the young German women.

The differences are less stark among the younger respondents as well as among the highest age group. This is true among the 14–15-year-olds because here even the German girls have only had contact to the opposite sex, beyond kissing, in a minority of cases. And it is true among the young women 21+ because while young migrant women delay becoming sexually active, they eventually do – so that the figures converge in adulthood. However, it is only in the case of kissing that we could talk about the same experiences. In other regards young women from migrant families have fewer experiences with sexual contact than young German women at age 21.
Experiences with Petting
Boys/young men by background

**Boys/young men by background.** If we compare boys/young men from German families to those from migrant families, the experiences with physical contact to the opposite sex are generally very similar. Overall, the 14–25-year-old German respondents were the more experienced; however, the difference is maximally 5 percentage points (touching breasts: 76%/71%).

This image changes somewhat when we distinguish by age group. It is most noticeable that at age 14 and 15, the non-German boys have a slight lead over their German peers. This is not the case when it comes to kissing, but the different types of petting were practised by a larger number of them. Here too the differences are not that great (depending on the type of petting between 4 and 7 points), but we can still see a counter-trend to the overall average. The differences become even more marked when we take an even closer look at the individual year cohorts: it is the 14-year-old migrant boys who have more experience; the differences for the various types of petting are 10 percentage points and more. By age 15 the differences already disappear.

The second deviation relates to the 16–17-year-olds. At this age touching breasts (plus 11 percentage points) as well as (not to the same extent) touching genitals is more widespread among the German boys.

**Gender comparison.** Generally speaking, experiences with kissing and petting are similarly widespread among both the male and female adolescents and young adults, including when all four age groups are compared with each other.

However, this impression is somewhat deceptive, since there are different developments depending on background, especially among the girls, which even out the gender comparison.

If we make an additional comparison by background in the gender comparison, we get the following picture: young German women aged 18–25 are slightly more familiar with all the different types of
petting compared to their male German peers. The gap is clearest for women touching male genitals (cited 12 percentage points more often than by their male peers). This is not true for the adolescent respondents: 14–17-year-old German girls and boys hardly differ in their experiences.

**TABLE: Distribution of different types of petting among 14–25-year-old Germans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Girls, 14-17</th>
<th>Boys, 14-17</th>
<th>Young women, 18-25</th>
<th>Young men, 18-25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kissing</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching breasts</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching female genitals</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching male genitals</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boys and young men with a migrant background on the other hand have more experiences with physical contact to the opposite sex than girls/young women with a migrant background, and this is true across the board. The differences are – unlike among the respondents with a German background – particularly marked among the adolescents; among the 14–17-year-olds the differences range from 9 to 13 points, depending on the type of contact. The level of experience varies in adulthood too, but not to the same extent. The differences disappear among the 21–25-year-olds.
11.2.2 Reasons for restraint with regard to sexual activities

The reasons why adolescents and young adults did not go beyond a certain point when exchanging intimacies are diverse and differ in their focuses depending on gender and on whether a migrant background is present or not.

Boys and girls with and without a migrant background have in common, however, that by far the most important reason for all of them is that they have not yet found the right person for any sexual contact that goes further. The barrier that comes from personal shyness is also highly relevant.

Reasons for Restraint with Regard to Sexual Activities

Girls/young women by background. In many areas the justifications of the girls/young women with and without a migrant background are similar. The main reasons for restraint – the lack of a partner and shyness – have already been mentioned.

Around three in ten girls/young women consider themselves simply ‘too young’. However, the identical figures of 29% conceal the fact that the two groups who gave these responses exhibit different age structures. Among the German girls it is the 14–17-year-olds who dominate – they make up around 70% of the group, whereas among the sexually restrained girls/young women with a migrant background only around 50% are under the age of 18, whereas the other half are already adults. ‘Too young’ is therefore relative. Comparing individual ages, we can see that the argument ‘too young’ is only used a lot by the 14 and 15-year-old German girls (51%/44%). From 16 onwards this reason declines rapidly in significance (24%). Girls with a migrant history cite this reason for much longer, into adulthood.
For young German girls, fear of negative parental reactions is hardly a reason to stay away from sexual activities. Even among the entire set of 14–17-year-olds only 9% cite this argument, most commonly the 14 and 15-year-olds. The situation is quite different for girls/young women of non-German background: the fear that ‘the parents could find out’ (and not approve) influences the behaviour of a section of the young women with a migrant background, even after they reach adulthood (18 and older).

**TABLE: ‘Fear that the parents could find out’ as an argument for sexual restraint – girls/young women by age groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls/young women</th>
<th>Girls 14–17</th>
<th>Young women 18–25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German background</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant background</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

For girls with a migrant background moral reasons carry a much greater importance than for German girls. This is particularly true for young women in adulthood, when they become the main reason to refrain from sexual activities, even after reaching legal adulthood. At the heart of the argument is the rejection of intense sexual contacts before marriage.

**TABLE: Arguments with a moral reference for sexual restraint girls/young women with a migrant background by age groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'I think it’s immoral'</th>
<th>Girls, 14–17</th>
<th>Young women, 18–25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I don’t think it’s right before marriage'</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

In the (small) group of young German women who are not yet sexually active, there is also a tendency to explain sexual abstinence in adulthood by stating that sexual intercourse should be reserved for marriage (cited 10% among the 18–25-year-olds, 2% by the 14–17-year-olds). When looking more closely, this argument is given by a minority of highly religious girls/young women of Protestant faith (22%). However, in general moral aspects are fairly alien to girls and young women from German families.

**Boys/young men by background.** Generally speaking, the justifications given by the boys/young men with and without a migrant background explaining their sexual restraint are more similar than those of the girls/young women. There are two notable ‘outliers’ among the boys/young men with a migrant background: they are less likely to adduce shyness and are less worried about doing something wrong/acting clumsily.
The moral arguments that so strongly characterize the arguments of their female peers are less important for the boys/young men of non-German background; however, even the boys from migrant families are much more likely to use these two reasons than the group of boys from German homes – and as was the case for the girls/young women, they become more important if the young migrants still have not become (fully) sexually active in adulthood.

TABLE: Arguments with a moral reference for sexual restraint – boys/young men with a migrant background by age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Boys, 14–17</th>
<th>Young men, 18–25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I think it’s immoral’</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I don’t think it’s right before marriage’</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender comparison. Putting the particular features aside that are related to the respondents’ background, the sexes differ strikingly in two regards. Firstly, ‘too young’ is a reason favoured much more by the female respondents. Girls/young women of both German and non-German background cite this as a reason for sexual restraint almost twice as often as boys/young men. Secondly it is almost exclusively the male and hardly at all the female adolescents/young adults who experience the obstacle that their partner did not want to engage in further sexual activity.

In detail. ‘I don’t think it’s right before marriage’ – among the adolescents/young adults with a migrant background this reason is primarily given by those of a Muslim faith and more so by the girls/young women – 55% of them – but still by a quarter of the Muslim boys (24%). A close religious tie intensifies this attitude.

If religion plays an important role, then adolescents and young adults of other denominations are also more likely to cite the marriage argument, using it to justify their abstinence.

It would be easy to think that the reasons for restraint when it comes to physical contact with the opposite sex would differ greatly depending on the extent of sexual activities engaged in so far, but in actual fact they differ surprisingly little, regardless of whether the adolescents/young adults have only kissed to date or whether they are already familiar with all types of petting. In some areas, however, there are differences between these two groups. Adolescents/young adults who have not yet experienced anything beyond kissing are twice as likely to say that they lacked ‘sufficient interest’ and that they were still ‘too young’ for that. Shyness also seems to play more of a role at the start of physical contact and less so when experiences are already present.

In return, the ‘fear of pregnancy’ is almost twice as often the reason for restraint among those who have engaged in petting compared to those who have only kissed to date – an attitude that is to be expected, since a further intensification of physical contact generally leads to consummating sexual intercourse, whereupon the danger of a pregnancy would become concrete.

The problem of having a partner who refuses more intense contact is almost non-existent among the respondents who have so far only kissed. However, among those who are already engaging in genital petting, this is very much one of the reasons why things did not go further, at least for the boys/young men: almost one in four failed because the partner did not want to ‘go further’. On the
other hand, none of the girls/young women said that the reason they did not go further was because their partner refused.

### Reasons for Restraint with Regard to Sexual Activities

**Comparison by form of physical contact engaged in to date**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Only kissed to date</th>
<th>Engaged in all petting options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lacking interest</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too shy</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too young</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s immoral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not right before marriage</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of pregnancy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

With regards to why they refrained from further contact, arguments that focus on ideas about what is the norm (‘immoral’, ‘not right before marriage’) are not really cited more often by those who have experience with petting than by the group who, to date, have only kissed. That means that those who use moral arguments appear not specifically to link them to refraining from sexual intercourse; these arguments appear to have a bearing more fundamentally on intense physical contact.

### Long-term trend comparison – German 12 14–17-year-olds

The most striking development over the course of almost 35 years has taken place with regard to how widespread female-led genital petting (touching male genitals) has become: while in the 1980s female-led genital petting was time-delayed vis-à-vis male-led genital petting (a fact expressed in lower percentages), both forms of genital petting are now experienced/practised to the same extent. This change can be seen in the responses of both sexes.

In addition, there are smaller and larger shifts for all the types of petting – looked at individually – that have taken place over the years. Changes here do not necessarily mean an increase in activities: today’s 14–17-year-old girls do not experience as much breast petting as their peers 35 years ago. The number of girls who have experienced breast petting at age 14, 15 and 17 is 10 percentage points lower in each case; only today’s 16-year-old girls have maintained the percentage of 35 years.

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12 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
ago. By the way, this is not an entirely new development: even in the 2009 survey the percentages were lower than they were in 1980.

Male-led genital petting is also less widespread as a response among 14-year-old girls today than it was in 1980 (minus 5 percentage points); however, among the 15 and 16-year-olds it has become more common (plus 9 percentage points). Experiences with female-led genital petting has also increased among the 15 and 16-year-olds. This leads to the equalization between female-led and male-led genital petting described above, because the 17-year-old girls were just as familiar with it in 1980 as they are today.

**TABLE: Level of distribution of different types of petting among 14–17-year-old German girls; trend comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Touching breasts</th>
<th>Touching female genitals</th>
<th>Touching male genitals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the boys, breast petting is about as widespread as it was during the first survey in 1980; this form of sexual contact has only increased among the 16-year-olds (plus 9 percentage points). Male-led genital petting is practised by rather more 15 and 16-year-olds today (plus 10/12 percentage points).

In line with the trend described at the start of this section, female-led genital petting is more widespread today than 35 years ago in almost all the age groups. The greatest increase has taken place in the responses given by the 16-year-old boys (plus 25 percentage points). This really is a new development because five years ago male-led and female-led genital petting were not yet equally widespread in this age group – today around half of the boys are familiar with both types. Although the greatest increase in percentage points lies with female-led genital petting among the 16-year-olds: relative to the starting figure, the figures have not just doubled for the 16-year-olds compared to 1980, but also for the 14 and 15-year-olds, only at a lower level.

**TABLE: Level of distribution of different types of petting among 14–17-year-old German boys; trend comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Touching breasts</th>
<th>Touching female genitals</th>
<th>Touching male genitals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %
11.3 Sexual intercourse
11.3.1 Experience with sexual intercourse in the various age groups

At 69%, around seven in ten adolescents and young adults between 14 and 25 have had sexual intercourse at least once in their lives.

The figures for the boys/young men correspond to this average quite closely regardless of background, while opposing trends can be found among the girls/young women depending on background: at 75%, the female respondents of German background are above the overall average, while girls/young women with foreign roots lie clearly below it at 56%.

These figures on their own do not yet say very much. The age span surveyed is the one during which sex lives develop. If we merely make a rough distinction between 14–17-year-olds on the one hand and young adults (18–25) on the other, the percentage who have experienced sexual intercourse in the former group is 30%, whereas it is 86% in the latter.

However, by what age have the majority completed their entry into a sexually (and heterosexually) active life by experiencing sexual intercourse for the first time? This point in time can be determined well when looking at the individual age groups.

Among the 16-year-olds the percentage who have experienced sexual intercourse still remains below the 50% mark, regardless of gender or background, meaning that at 16 the majority of adolescents are not yet fully sexually active. By age 17 the 50% mark has clearly been crossed. Girls with a migrant background are to be excluded from this development: they only cross the 50% mark for sexual intercourse at age 19.
With regard to providing advice on contraceptive issues it is very much those young people who are fully sexually active at a young age who come to the fore. We must distinguish by gender and background when looking at statements about this topic.

**Girls.** Among the 14-year-olds, the girls who have had sexual intercourse remain very much the exception in 2014: only a very small number of girls – around 5% – say they became sexually active at this age. Girls with and without a migrant background hardly differ in this regard in this age group (4%/6%). However, they do differ in one regard: for the few girls of non-German background who have already had sexual intercourse, the first time has often also remained the only time to date; two of the five girls said they had not yet experienced further sexual contact (German girls: 8%).

From age 15 onwards the figures diverge. Among the 15-year-old German girls, one in five have experienced sexual intercourse, an increase of 16 percentage points compared to their 14-year-old counterparts. When comparing the 15 and 16-year-olds and the 16 and 17-year-olds at least 20 percentage points are added in each case so that the percentage of sexually experienced respondents reaches around two thirds among the 17-year-old German girls.

There are further clear increases after this stage too – from 17 to 18 by 17 points and from 18 to 19 by another 8 points. That means the 19-year-olds have reached a 90% level, which then only grows slowly in subsequent years until a maximum figure is reached for the oldest respondents, the 25-year-olds, at 97%.

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**Experience With Sexual Intercourse**

**Girls/young women by age**

![Graph showing sexual intercourse rates by age and background](image_url)

**Question:** Please indicate everything you have already personally done or experienced.

**HERE:** sexual intercourse

**Base:** 14–25-year-old girls/young women

**Fig. 56**
Girls from migrant families do not exhibit the same increase from age 14 to 15. Although the number of girls who have had sexual intercourse in this group also goes up, the increase is far more moderate (from 4% to 12%). They make up this difference from German girls again somewhat in the following year; when comparing the 15-year-olds to the 16-year-olds, the increase for this group is a sizable 25 percentage points. After that the rate of increase slows considerably. Between 16 and 17 only few percentage points are added so that among the 17-year-old girls with a migrant background – unlike for their German peers – still fewer than half of them have become fully sexually active (44%). This does not change for the 18-year-olds either: for that reason the biggest difference between the two groups is among the 18-year-olds.

It is only at age 20 that two thirds of the girls with a migrant background have become fully sexually active, a level already exhibited at age 17 by the German girls. The highest percentage for the young women with a migrant background occurs at age 24; in this age group 90% said they had already had sexual intercourse.

**Boys/young men.** Boys/young men with and without a migrant background resemble each other much more with regard to their sexual experiences than do the girls/young women with and without a migrant background.

### Experience With Sexual Intercourse

**Boys/young men by age**

The most striking deviation occurs among the 14-year-olds: among the 14-year-old boys with a migrant background surveyed, 14% said they had experienced sexual intercourse. That is a much higher percentage than for all the other adolescents of this age (German boys: 3%; girls: 4%/6%). For some of them it has remained a one-off experience to date, because one in four of them has not (yet) had sexual intercourse again.
Other than that, the boys with a migrant background exhibit similar levels of sexual activity as the German boys when comparing age groups. Since the case numbers are not particularly large for the comparison group (between n=60 and n=80 per age group), the deviations of plus/minus around 4 percentage points are not statistically significant.

It is a similar story for the young men. However, the tendency here is that the young men with a migrant background exhibit slightly lower levels of sexual intercourse experience than their German peers. At least the percentages are slightly lower in all of the age groups (exception: the 23-year-olds).

**Gender comparison.** When comparing the sexes, it makes sense to also distinguish by background because of the substantial differences between the girls/young women.

At age 14 and 15 the German boys have had sexual intercourse almost as often as the German girls of the same age; at 3% compared to 6% (14-year-olds)/18% compared to 22% (15-year-olds), the percentage gaps for those who have already experienced sexual intercourse are not great. Among the 16-year-olds, the girls have a 10 percentage point lead ahead of the boys, whose percentage in the sexually experienced camp also increases greatly between 15 and 16, but not quite as much as among their female peers. The boys do not fully catch up on that gap at age 17 either: at 17, 65% of the girls, but only 58% of the boys have experienced sexual intercourse.

The German boys reach the levels of the 17-year-old German girls a year later, at age 18. In contrast to the girls/young women, this level remains steady for a while, before increasing again, when again the increase takes place more slowly than for their female peers. It is only after a two-year delay, by age 21, that the boys reach the 90% level. The percentages fluctuate around this level for the 21–24-year-olds; by age 25 it has finally clearly above it at 94%.

A comparison between the girls/young women and boys/young men of non-German background is laden with larger margins of error since the case numbers in the individual age groups are not that great (sometimes n < 40); therefore the figures need to be interpreted with caution. A similar percentage of sexually experienced respondents only appears to exist among the 16-year-olds and then again among the older respondents (at age 24). Other than that the boys/young men are the more active throughout – or rather, the girls/young women of non-German background are the much more restrained because the boys/young men are not above average; instead, they tend to exhibit slightly smaller percentages than the German boys/young men.

**In detail.** Beyond comparing the level of sexual activity, it is worth looking at how this sexual intercourse is embedded in the sexual activities of the adolescents and young adults overall. What is shown to be a gradual development for the 14–17-year-olds – from kissing to breast petting, from breast petting to genital petting and after that, with a fair gap, sexual intercourse – does not continue in the same manner for the young adults. The process of sexual convergence seems to happen faster in adulthood. This is exhibited most obviously for the German girls. Among the 18–25-year-olds – in all the individual age groups – the percentages who have experienced sexual intercourse correspond to the percentages who have experienced breast petting. The percentages for both forms of genital petting however remain approx. 10 percentage points below the percentages of those who have had sexual intercourse. Those who have sexual intercourse at age 18 or later therefore sometimes ‘skip’ the genital petting phase (at first), moving from touching the breast petting straight to sexual intercourse. It is only the experience of kissing that bucks this trend: more of these respondents have kissed than have experienced breast petting or sexual intercourse.
The behaviour of the young men and also of the young women with a migrant background follows a similar approach, albeit not quite so clearly; sometimes – particularly at age 18/19 – it is only the female-led genital petting that is not practised as its own phase prior to sexual intercourse.

As in all areas of sexual contact, the young Turkish women the young women with a migrant background generally also exhibit a particular restraint with regard to sexual intercourse even compared to young women with a migrant background generally. The percentage that have had sexual intercourse is quite a lot lower than the average for the young women of non-German background as a whole: when looking at the entire age spectrum from 14 to 25, only half as many have had sexual intercourse (30% v. 56% among women with a migrant background overall); for the 14–17-year-olds it is less than half the number (10% v. 24%). That makes the gap between them and the German women even bigger. This is already true for the 14–17-year-olds – German girls have a lead of 10 percentage points with regard to sexual-intercourse experience – and even more so when looking at the entire age spectrum from 14 to 25, because here the group of women from migrant families already differ greatly from the young German women (percentage of respondents with sexual intercourse experience: 56% v. 75%).

Boys between the ages of 14 and 17 do not differ so greatly in their behaviour depending on their country of background, but when looking at the 14–25-year-olds in total, it is again the young Turkish men who are less likely to have had sexual intercourse (58% v. 66% on average for male migrants), even though the differences are nowhere near as pronounced as among the young women.

Young people (from 16 onwards) who do not have a clear heterosexual orientation also have some first physical experiences with the opposite sex. Most of them have experienced kissing, whereas further intimacy is not necessarily pursued anymore. The young men with a more homosexual leaning in particular are less likely to engage in further experiences with the opposite sex. Somewhat more than half have engaged in breast petting and male-led genital petting, while fewer than half have engaged in female-led genital petting and sexual intercourse.

Long-term trend comparison – Germans 13 14–17-year-old

If we compare the figures for how many German young people had sexual intercourse experience in 1980 vis-à-vis today, we can see that sexual activity during the teenage years has increased over the decades. Today an average of 34% of the 14–17-year-old girls and 28% of the German boys are sexually active; the figures for 1980 were 25%/15%. The figures are higher now than they were 35 years ago in all age groups.

At the same time it is also true that we cannot talk about an uninterrupted development towards more 14–17-year-old respondents with sexual-intercourse experience. Instead, there seems to have been a slight decline in recent years. The maximum figures were reached in 2005. Since then the percentages have dropped slightly.

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13 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
In three of the four age groups the figures are lower than in the most recent survey five years ago (with one exception – the 15-year-olds – the figures stagnate at a similar level to where they were at in 2009). It is worth taking a look at the details because the development is different in the individual age groups as well as for the girls and boys.

For the 14-year-olds it is the case for both the girls and the boys that the number who are sexually active – a small minority to begin with – has decreased compared to previous years. Between 1998 and 2005 the girls and sometimes the boys reached figures in the double digits (between 10% and 12%). In 2009 these figures had returned to single digits (7%/4%) and this level has become consolidated in this current survey (6%/3%). Girls and boys alike of this age have hardly developed any sexual activities. Nevertheless the percentages for the girls have been around two to three points above those of the boys ever since 1980.
Among the **15-year-olds** there has been more movement over the years; in addition there have been gender-specific rises and falls. Comparing the whole period from 1980 to 2014, two and a half times as many girls of this age have had sexual intercourse. The figures rose until 1998; in 1998 the current maximum figure was reached for this group at 29%, thanks to a strong increase of 11 percentage points between 1996 and 1998. Over the three subsequent surveys (2001, 2005 and 2009) the figures declined. The current figure of 22% confirms the lower level of the preceding years; however, there has not been a further decline. Among the 15-year-old boys the number who are sexually active has actually increased more than fourfold in the past 35 years. This is because in 1980 it was very much the exception for 15-year-old boys to be sexually active already (4%). The boys did not exhibit the ‘great leap’ the girls experienced between 1996 and 1998 in the same way; however, in subsequent surveys they too exhibited an increase. In 2005 they reached the 20% mark, but generally speaking the percentages have fluctuated somewhat below this figure since 2001 and that is the current situation too (18%). The big differences between the girls and boys that we saw in 1998 (a difference of 16 percentage points) have decreased to a slight lead for the girls; in the three most recent surveys the gap has been no greater than 3 or 4 percentage points.

The **16-year-old** girls and boys also exhibited different levels of sexual activity in 1980 (girls: 28%, boys: 15%) and here too the figures have gone up over the decades. In 1994 the boys drew even with the girls, in 2001 they almost did, however, generally speaking the girls of this age tend to be sexually active much more than their male peers. The current gap between the two groups is 10 percentage points. The progression is much steadier for the boys: it has been the case for 15 years that the number who have experienced sexual intercourse at this age has been 35% (plus/minus 1 to 2 percentage points). If we look at the same period for the girls, the percentages fluctuate between 40% and 50%, with the maximum value of 50% being reached in the preceding survey of 2009. The current figure is 45%, and thus 5 percentage points lower than five years ago.

It was already true for **17-year-old** girls in 1980 that the majority of them had already had sexual intercourse (56%). 17-year-old boys were quite a way away from that, with a figure of 38%, but they quickly caught up in subsequent years. In 1994 more than half of the boys of this age had already experienced sexual intercourse and in 1996 their figures were almost equal to those of the girls (65%/69%). Apart from outliers both upwards (girls in 2005: 73%) and downwards (boys in 1998: 54%), it was true between 1996 and 2009 that roughly two in three girls and boys of this age were sexually active. This has even been the case for the girls since 1994 and this trend continues in 2014 (65%). The behaviour of the 17-year-old girls is therefore characterized by great constancy. By contrast, there has been a decline for the boys in the most recent survey: in 2014 only 58% of them said they had already had sexual intercourse – 7 percentage points below the 2009 value. As a result, the gap between the two sexes has increased again for this age group.

**DIGRESSION: Estimated percentage of peers (same age) who have had sexual intercourse**

Young people often have incorrect ideas about how widespread sexual intercourse really is in their age group. Younger respondents tend to overestimate the figures, at times greatly so, while 16 and 17-year-olds in particular tend to underestimate them.
Among the 14-year-olds, the majority correctly assume that only a few of their peers have already had sexual intercourse – the figures lie between 3% and 14% depending on gender and background. Nevertheless the overestimations are already surprising here; the respondents often believed that one in three has had sex, while some of them estimated even greater percentages.

At age 15 the incorrect estimates become even more pronounced. One third of the German respondents said for example that at least one in two, if not indeed ‘most’, had had sexual intercourse at their age, whereas the actual figures lie between 18% and 22%.

German 17-year-olds on the other hand tend, conversely, to underestimate the actual figures. Two thirds of the German girls in this age group are sexually experienced already, so the correct answer would have been ‘most’. 52% assume as much, but 21% said it was around one in two, while 22% chose the option ‘one in three’.

Among the 17-year-old girls with a migrant background the reality is that somewhat less than half have had sexual intercourse (44%). However, 47% believe that ‘most’ have had sexual intercourse, while only 28% choose the answer ‘around one in two’.

The 16-year-olds are particularly interesting since the actual percentages for the Germans and the girls with a migrant background are reflected relatively well in two of the answer categories. Among the 16-year-old German girls 45% have had sexual intercourse (corresponds to the answer ‘around half’), while among the non-German girls and the German boys, 37%/35% have had sexual intercourse (corresponds to the answer ‘around one in three’).

For all three groups, only a minority are correct in their estimation.

Of the 16-year-old German girls, only one in four chose the correct answer ‘around half’, one third believed more than that were sexually active in their age group, while 40% assumed the opposite, namely that the figures were lower. The tendency here is therefore to underestimate the situation.

The 16-year-old German boys are most accurate in their assessment; somewhat more than a third of them (36%) correctly believe that around a third of their peers have already had sexual intercourse. Two and a half times as many boys overestimate the reality as underestimate it (46% v. 17%) – that means boys of this age overestimate the actual situation substantially.

Among the girls with a migrant background three in ten chose the correct category ‘around a third’, almost twice as many believed it was more than that (57%); a few also underestimated the figure (13%: ‘only a few’). Therefore the estimates given by the 16-year-old girls with a migrant background go way beyond the realistic figures in their own group.

Of course such estimates can only be used as a reference point. The responses given by the girls and boys surely will not relate purely to their own age group or their own geographical background; some of them will have thought of their own circle of friends, which could lead to different estimations depending on the composition of the group, while others will have had young people as a whole in mind, therefore giving an average for all young people. Nevertheless it undoubtedly is not without an impact if girls and boys incorrectly believe that sexual contact is standard or at least widespread at their age.
Peers Who Have Had Sexual Intercourse
Responses given by the 16-year-olds, by background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base: 16-year-olds</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only few</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around one in three</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Around one in two</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of them</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 59

11.3.2 Sexual intercourse – ages

Adolescents and young adults were also asked directly how old they and their partner were when they had sex for the first time. Since the ages given in the nature of things correlate strongly with the respondents’ own ages – 14-year-olds cannot of course say they had sexual intercourse for the first time at 18 – it makes no sense to look at the answers overall. However, the responses of the 21–25-year-olds who have already experienced sexual intercourse can provide some insight. In this age bracket around 90% have already experienced had intercourse; for young German women the figure is no less than 95%; that means their statements are meaningful for the majority of the relevant group. This is true to a more limited extent for the young women with a migrant background, because the percentage of them who have already had sexual intercourse is only 81%.

A good two thirds of the ages given by the 21–25-year-olds in response to the question when they first had intercourse focus on the 15–18 age span; for the young German men and women this is true for as many as almost three quarters. Lower and higher ages are represented to approximately the same extent, although the ages are scattered more for those aged 18+. On average, the young men between 21 and 25 surveyed were somewhat older than their female peers when they had sexual intercourse for the first time.

However, it is noticeable that while the young men between 21 and 25 clearly looked for a sexual partner who was the same age or slightly older, the age gap between the young women and their first sexual partner is more than two years – their partners are on average two years older than they are.
11.4 Same-sex encounters

Around one in ten adolescents and young adults said they had (also) had ‘close physical contact’ – that being how the question was phrased – with someone of the same sex. The average figure for the girls/young women is 12% and therefore somewhat higher than that of the boys/young men at 9%.

Background plays no role in this question, but age does. Among the 14 and 15-year-olds, same-sex experiences are not very widespread, either among girls or among boys (7%/4%). From age 16 onwards a figure of at least 10% of girls say ‘yes’ to having had ‘close physical contact’ with a member of the same sex. Over the years this figure rises moderately to 14% among the 21–25-year-olds. There is also an increase among the boys, but the figure remains in single digits until adulthood. It is only for the 21–25-year-olds that double digits are reached at 12%.

Close physical same-sex contacts are not to be equated with a homosexual orientation! Even some of the young women and men who class themselves as exclusively heterosexual have had close physical contact to a member of the opposite sex, although the figures are low, at 10%/6%. Nevertheless: for a group of young people, same-sex experiences seem to be part of discovering their bodies and sexuality, a form of exploration in all directions.

The 14 and 15-year-olds of this study were not yet asked about sexual orientation, but from age 16 onwards the young women and men were asked directly whether they felt more drawn to boys/men...
or girls/women or to both sexes. 4% of the male respondents and 2% of the female respondents between the ages of 16 and 25 came out in the survey as having a clear preference for their own sex.

### Same-Sex Sexual Orientation

#### By age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homosexual orientation</td>
<td>Bisexual orientation</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>Homosexual orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-17-year-olds</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20-year-olds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25-year-olds</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group exhibiting a bisexual orientation is of similar size but with the inverse gender distribution: more girls/young women than boys/young men opted for the answer category ‘to both’ sexes when asked about their sexual orientation (5%/2%). This is not to be interpreted as indecisiveness: only around 1% of the young women and men on average answered ‘don’t know’. And it also is not a phenomenon of the younger respondents who are still in the phase of developing their sexual orientation, where it could be assumed that young women were initially more willing to experiment and less set than their male peers. However, the different focuses remain even when comparing the individual age groups. Among the adults, 5% of the male 21–25-year-olds class themselves as having a homosexual orientation and 2% bisexual; among the female respondents of the same age 3% say they are attracted to women, but 6%, or more than twice as many, say they are equally attracted to both sexes.

Of the young women and men who stated they had either a homosexual or a bisexual orientation, or who answered with ‘don’t know’, at least half have had close physical contact to members of the same sex in the past 12 months.

The adults 18+ among them were also asked whether this contact was limited to kissing and/or caressing, or went beyond that. The responses are clear: if a homosexual or bisexual tendency is present and the respondents sought out physical intimacy with a member of the same sex in the
past 12 months, then the encounter did not stop at kissing or cuddling (11%/10%); instead these encounters generally went beyond that (89%/87%).

When and under what circumstances the first intense same-sex sexual contacts occurred was not determined. The significance of the results would be limited in any case because the case numbers are very small in this group (n=68 young women and n=39 young men with a homosexual or bisexual orientation and physical contact in the past 12 months).

11.5 Experiences with masturbation

Masturbation is a form of sexual activity that is practised to very different degrees depending on gender. Far more boys continue to have much more experience with masturbation, and their experiences also start earlier: among the 14-year-old boys more than half and among the 15-year-olds at least two thirds have masturbated in the past 12 months – the same levels are only reached by the girls/young women at age 22, 23.

From age 16 onwards, at least four in five boys masturbate and the figures remain in this dimension for the older groups. Among the girls/young women the development is different. Among the 14 and 15-year-olds not even one in four has had experience with masturbation in the past twelve months. Among the 16/17-year-olds the number has almost doubled, but is still below half. It is only between 18 and 19 that the girls cross the 50%-mark. The percentage continues to rise up to age 22/23. This
is where the maximum figures have been reached: 68%/66%. After that the percentage of young women masturbating drops again. The decline is slight but noticeable: of the 24 and 25-year-old young women only 60% and 58% respectively say they masturbated in the last year.

Adolescents and young adults only differ in their experiences by background in certain areas. Boys with non-German roots are more likely to have masturbated at age 14/15 than German boys. At 16/17 the figures are roughly the same for both groups. After that the percentage is higher for the non-German young men again. From 20 onwards, the two groups converge again.

Among the girls the experiences with masturbation are relatively independent of background. What is most noticeable is that the number of masturbating young women with a migrant background drops substantially below the maximum level for the 24 and 25-year-olds. Therefore the differences are more pronounced for the older respondents.

**In detail.** Masturbation is a form of sexual activity that is practised more often by those with higher levels of education. This is true for both sexes, but at a different level. Among the boys/young men the majority have had experience with masturbation regardless of educational background; among the girls/young women the ones who have had experience with masturbation who have a low or moderate level of education are in the minority; only in the group of girls/young women with an 18+ school-leaving certificate, or who have attended/attend university or college, are more than half familiar with these practices. If we focus on the young adult women 18 and older, the percentages who have had experience with masturbation are higher, but the differences correlated to education remain – only among the more educated does a clear majority have experience with masturbation (66%).

Masturbation is an independent form of sexual activity – the percentages of respondents who have masturbated remain relatively constant for example, regardless of the age when they first had sexual intercourse. Young women who have not yet had sexual intercourse even in adulthood (primarily women with a migrant background) are, however, less likely to masturbate than their sexually active female peers.

Masturbation is definitely linked to sexual age: particularly among the girls/young women the number of respondents who are active in this manner goes up substantially with sexual maturity: if the first period has only recently occurred, i.e. no more than a year ago, or menstruation has not yet begun, then the percentage of girls/young women who masturbate is 20%. If the event is 2–4 years ago, it is 33% and if it is 5+ years ago, it is 45%. For some boys there are big changes, particularly in the initial phase of sexual development: if the first ejaculation occurred within the last year (or not at all yet), then 47% of the boys masturbate, if it occurred 2–4 years ago, it is 80%.

The small group of young women with a homosexual or bisexual orientation are more familiar with masturbation than the group of heterosexual young women (70% v. 55%). Among the young men masturbation is equally widespread, regardless of sexual orientation.
Long-term trend comparison – German 14–17-year-olds

Experiences With Masturbation, Past 12 Months
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

The very first survey in 1980 already gathered data about experiences with masturbation. At the time, two questions were asked ‘first masturbation at what age?’ and (for those who gave an age) ‘masturbation in the past 12 months?’ – while the current survey is limited to the latter of the two questions. In order to compare, the responses of the earlier surveys to the question ‘masturbated in the past 12 months’ were extrapolated to the totality of the boys and girls.

The question about masturbation was not asked in every survey; instead it was asked in alternation with other more taboo subjects such as same-sex contacts and sexual violence. For that reason the trend depiction is limited to three data sets.

Looking at the period of 35 years, little has changed in young people’s behaviour in this respect. There was a moderate increase between 1980 and 1994 in the number of girls who masturbated; since then the figures have stagnated. For the boys the percentage who masturbated remained constant for the first 15 years; but there has been an increase more recently. However, the rise of 7 percentage points between 1994 and 2014 does not represent a particularly pronounced increase. Generally speaking the difference between the sexes, which has always been striking, is confirmed again in 2014.

14 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
12 The first act of sexual intercourse
12.1 Planned or spontaneous?

First Act of Sexual Intercourse: Planned or Spontaneous
By gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'I wasn’t expecting it at all.'</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'I thought it would happen soon, but it was a surprise on the day.'</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'I knew it would happen that day.'</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For almost a third of the adolescents and young adults the ‘first time’ was an event they knew would happen on that day (and therefore one they could plan for). But that figure also means that two thirds did not approach the event in a targeted manner; however, the level of spontaneity varies. Around one in two felt that it would happen ‘soon’, only the exact day was a surprise.

That means 20% of the 14–25-year-olds were completely surprised by the events (‘I wasn’t expecting at all that I’d have sex’) – a minority, but still of significant proportions.

**In detail.** The percentage of respondents who were taken completely by surprise is relatively constant, regardless of whether we look at girls or boys, adolescents or young adults, with or without a migrant background. There are shifts between a vague sense of it about to happen and a complete lack of preparedness that can be seen in some of the subgroups.

Education and the social environment that is associated with attending certain types of school play a role, as does the age when the respondents first had intercourse, though it must be said that these two influencing factors are also linked, because the group of respondents with a basic level of education tend to experience their first time at a younger age than the more highly educated respondents.

Adolescents and young adults who have attended a non-academic secondary school are more likely to experience their first time (up to a third) as a surprising event, while only half that number in the
group that has an 18+ school-leaving certificate or equivalent qualifications experienced it as a complete surprise. Instead, they were prepared for it at least with a gut feeling. The educational differences are not as clear for the boys/young men with a German background (‘wasn’t expecting it at all’: 29% v. 20%); however, for the young men with a migrant background and for the girls/young women from German families it is very obvious (34% v. 16% / 31% v. 15%).

Depending on the age of the respondents at the time in question, we can also see some differences for the adolescents and young adults of German background. The percentages who were completely surprised vary in proportion to the age of the respondents (the younger they were, the more of them were completely surprised); this difference, however, is not as marked as that which correlates with educational level. The later the first sexual activities took place, the less likely they were to be completely unplanned. This is true until the first-time age of 17/18; this is where we see the lowest percentages. After that the percentages not expecting to have sex for the first time go up again, meaning that even among those who became sexually active later (sexual intercourse for the first time at 19 and older) there are countless respondents who were surprised by the situation. This seems to be specifically true of the German adolescents.

**TABLE: Planned or spontaneous first act of intercourse; here: ‘I wasn’t expecting it to happen at all’ by age at first time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First time at...</th>
<th>14 or younger</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18 or older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German girls/young women</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German boys/young men</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is not the case for young adults with a migrant background. On the contrary – they are rarely surprised by the events, although the case numbers become too small if we differentiate by the individual ages of when they became sexually active. We are particularly unable to make definitive statements about the young men who started to be sexually active later in life (n=29).

However, the connexions also become quite clear for the group of young female Turks, without looking at the individual ages. Their group is numerically large enough for an assessment, since – if they are sexually active already at all – they become sexually active substantially later than other young women, half of them only when they are 18 or older. They approach the event in a more planned manner. Only 8% of the girls/young women from Turkish families were not expecting to have sexual intercourse on the day it happened (average for all girls/young women: 19%); 44% on the other hand said it was completely clear to them (average: 32%).

There is, however, a criterion that correlates far more closely with how planned the event was than education or age at the time, and that is how well the respondents knew the partner.

Adolescents and young adults whose first experience of intercourse was within a steady relationship were only rarely surprised by the development of events (only 11% of the girls/young women and 12% of the boys/young men). If the first time took place with a partner who was only a casual acquaintance or completely unknown, then it was a completely surprising and therefore unplanned event for around half of these young people. That makes intuitive sense – the level of familiarity also
plays a role beyond the rather rare case that the first sexual partner is a chance acquaintance, however. Even when the respondents classed their partner as a ‘close acquaintance’, the percentage who were surprised is still twice as high (24%/25%) as when the partner was a boyfriend/girlfriend.

**Long-term trend comparison – German\(^{15}\) 14–17-year-olds**

**First Act of Sexual Intercourse: Planned or Spontaneous**

Long-term trend, response ‘I wasn’t expecting it at all’

![Graph showing the long-term trend of planned or spontaneous first act of sexual intercourse among German 14–17-year-olds.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig. 65

The long-term trend impressively illustrates the initially negative and then very positive development among the boys during the survey period. The troubling divergence of the girls’ and boys’ behaviours from the mid-nineties is striking. More and more boys described the situation in which they first had intercourse as completely unexpected. Between 1996 and 2005 at least a third of them ‘hadn’t expected it at all’ according to their own testimony. The maximum figure was reached in 2005 at 37%. Four years later, in 2009, this trend towards an ever more unplanned entry into sexuality was not just broken, it declined so significantly that it reached the girls’ level for the first time.

The boys’ current figures of 18% are approximately at the same level as they were for the previous survey; the new, very much lower level compared to the previous years is therefore confirmed. At the same time the figures for both sexes are very similar, as was also the case four years ago.

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\(^{15}\) 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
What about the girls? Their behaviour has remained much more constant over the years. The number of girls who were completely taken by surprise by the first time they had intercourse fluctuated only between 19% and 25% between 1980 and 2005. The increasing lack of planning exhibited by the boys from the mid-1990s was not copied by the girls. However, they too were part of the break in the trend between 2005 and 2009: in the 2009 survey fewer girls than in 2005 said that their first time had been completely unexpected. The decrease (from 24% to 17%) was nowhere near so pronounced as it was for the boys, but it was noticeable. The current figures also reinforce the lower level for the girls.

However, the figures did not immediately go into reverse for sexual intercourse that was clearly planned. Instead, there was an increase in the number of respondents who felt ‘it was about to happen’, without being able to give a specific day.

The number of young people approaching the first act of sexual intercourse in a planned manner is gradually going up. This has been observable among the boys since 2005, for the girls the trend has occurred in this survey. However, the current figures for the first act of intercourse as a planned event still remain below the levels of the first survey in 1980.

### TABLE: Planning or spontaneity for the first act of intercourse; here: ‘I knew it would happen that day’; trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German girls</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German boys</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

12.2 Initiative for the first act of intercourse

Around half of the sexually active 14–25-year-olds described the first act of intercourse as an event that was desired by both participants in the situation. ‘We both wanted it’ was the answer chosen by both the adolescents as well as the young adults of both sexes.

It is rare that one partner was dominant. If this was the case, then the initiative came from the male side more often. The statements given by the girls/young women and the boys/young men are in accord. Girls/young women are more likely to have given general curiosity as the reason than boys (10% v. 4%) – that may be somewhat of a compensation for the fact that they were less likely to pick the response ‘primarily it was _me_ who wanted it’. However, the male respondents’ assessment matched the responses given by the girls/young women: few perceived a one-sided desire coming from the female partner.

The description ‘it just happened in the situation’ speaks for little direct planning. This ‘slipping into’ a situation that ultimately leads to (the first) sexual intercourse is far more widespread than a one-sided active endeavour by one of the two participants. Around a third of the young people chose this response – a sizeable figure.
The distributions to the answer categories remain very similar, even when we differentiate not just by gender but also by background. The boys/young men with a migrant background are particularly likely to initiate the events based on their own desire (and hence are less likely to talk about a mutual desire).

**In detail.** Other factors are more crucial than background. There are once again big differences depending on educational background and the age at which the respondents first had sex.

If the adolescents/young adults come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, then in the majority of cases the first time was not triggered by a mutual desire for intercourse; instead, it was more likely to have ‘just happened’. For the young people who first had intercourse at age 14 or younger, they were less likely than average to state that the initiative was mutual. The higher the level of education, the more likely the first sexual intercourse was an event desired by both parties. For the boys/young men with a migrant background this result does not just stem from the fact that with increasing education fewer end up in the situation without much input; instead, the number with a one-sided desire for sexual intercourse also goes down.
Long-term trend comparison 1994 / 2014 – German 14–17-year-olds

Initiative for the First Act of Intercourse
Trend comparison 1994-2014

For girls of German background the long-term comparison over 20 years reveals a very constant picture: the 2014 responses are no different to the 1994 ones.

There has been more of a development among the boys: currently, more boys than 20 years ago describe the situation of their first time as one of mutual desire (57% v. 39%). That means the German boys cite mutual desire even more than the girls – it was the other way around in 1994, and it is also not the case over the entire age spectrum from 14 to 25.

At the same time, the number of boys who said it just happened in the situation has decreased by 10 percentage points, a positive development. There is also a drop in the number of boys who initiate the first time themselves; this too contributes to an increase in the responses saying it had been a mutual decision.

If one of the participants moves the situation forward, then the initiative continues to come from the male respondents twice as often than from the girls.

---

16 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
12.3 Level of familiarity with the first sexual-intercourse partner

The girls/young women have a greater desire for familiarity with their sexual partner before having intercourse for the first time. Around six in ten girls/young women experienced their first time in a steady relationship. Compared to the statements made by their male peers, the answer ‘in a steady relationship’ was chosen by girls/young women at least 9 percentage points more often.

Girls/young women from different backgrounds differ from each other in that some of the young women of non-German background do not just mention a steady relationship, they say they were engaged (4%) or already married (2%) to their partner – such a strong connection to the first sexual partner was entirely exceptional for young German women (under 0.5%).

When they describe their first sexual partner, German boys/young men choose the response ‘not known’ as well as the two less tied connexions by 1 to 4 percentage points more than their female German peers.

Boys/young men with a migrant history deviate much more from the overall picture. For them, the number whose first experience of sexual intercourse was within a steady relationship is in the minority (43%). Instead, for many of them their partner was a casual acquaintance and many more than among the other groups had no relationship to her at all before the event. Together, these two figures make up around a quarter of the boys/young men with a migrant background (German boys/young men: 14%, girls/young women with/without migrant background: both 10%).
In detail. When comparing the different ages, we can see regardless of gender and background that the older respondents are less likely to say that they first had intercourse within a steady relationship. What is surprising is that this phenomenon is particularly marked among the girls/young women:

**TABLE: ‘In a steady relationship’, ‘engaged’ or ‘married’ to the partner of the first sexual intercourse – girls/young women by age groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>14-15 y.o.</th>
<th>16-17 y.o.</th>
<th>18-20 y.o.</th>
<th>21-25 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German girls/young women</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women w. migrant background</td>
<td>79*</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base n < 30  Figures in %

On the one hand these figures could suggest that the now older girls/young women did not experience their – now further in the past – first sexual encounters within a steady relationship as often as those who only recently became sexually active. On the other hand, they could also contain a clue that those who became sexually active later in life were also more likely to first have intercourse outside of a steady relationship.

A closer analysis by age at which the first intercourse experience took place does indeed show for the young German women that if they first experienced intercourse late, in particular if it happened at 19 or older, there was a tendency towards that partner being only a casual acquaintance. In this (admittedly not very large) group of young German women, only around half experienced intercourse for the first time with a steady partner (in a few cases also with the fiancé or husband); however, around a quarter only knew their partner casually and in isolated cases they did not know him at all.

The highest level of familiarity exists for the German girls who first had intercourse at age 15. The percentage in a steady relationship here is 67% – the largest percentage for this category. At 6%, a spontaneous, casual relationship to the sexual partner (or no relationship at all) is rare. To compare: the figure here is half of what it is for those who first had intercourse at age 18, and a quarter of what it is if the young women were even older.

For young women from non-German homes it is a different picture. Here, the percentage who first had intercourse outside of a steady relationship is greatest for those who had their first sexual experiences very young (casual: 12%, not at all: 4%). Girls with a non-German background are most likely to have intercourse for the first time within a steady relationship if this took place at age 17 (steady relationship: 64%, engaged: 2%). Then, if they had sexual intercourse for the first time at a later age, i.e. at 19 or older: one in four relationships in this group had an extremely formal character, because 16% said they were engaged and 8% said they did not have intercourse before they were married. Coupled with those who called their partner a boyfriend, 80% of the young women with a migrant background who first had intercourse relatively late were in a steady relationship at the time. However, this description only really applies to one group of girls/young women: it is the girls/young women of Turkish descent or from the Middle East who start becoming sexually active late and then within a formal relationship.
For young German men, if they had sex for the first time at a relatively late date (19 or older), the intensity of the relationship is shifted away from a steady relationship here too, but not into the area of casual relationships. For them the percentage that call their sexual partner a ‘close acquaintance’ is higher.

Because of the small case number, it is not possible to say anything about boys/young men with a migrant background. The few who became sexually active late seem to have found their partner more often outside of a steady relationship than did their male German peers.

**Trend: 14–17-year-olds**

Over the past 10 years the percentage of boys who experienced their first intercourse with a steady partner has increased. The most significant jump came from the boys with a migrant background. Positively, the percentage of boys in this group who did not know their first sexual partner at all or only casually also declined (2005: 37%, currently 22%; not depicted in the figure).

---

**Level of Familiarity With the First Sexual-Intercourse Partner**

**Trend, 14–17-year-olds**

In a ‘steady relationship’ (incl. engaged/married) with first sexual intercourse partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>German background</td>
<td>Migrant background</td>
<td>German background</td>
<td>Migrant background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The gap to the girls has nevertheless grown a bit again, since both the German and the non-German girls are also experiencing intercourse for the first time more commonly in a steady relationship once more. Now at 73%, the percentage of German girls is 9/8 percentage points higher than in 2005 and 2009 and therefore also higher than for the first survey in 1980 (61%) or for the mid-1990s (65%). For the girls with a migrant background the current figure is also 6/9 percentage points higher than in the two previous surveys.
Long-term trend comparison – 14–17-year-old German boys

Looking at the entire 35-year survey period, the percentage of boys who experienced intercourse for the first time with a steady partner has increased. With the exception of the year 1998, when there was a brief drop down to 40%, the percentage has steadily risen from 41% in 1980 to the present day. The 50% mark was crossed for the first time in 2005 and four years later, in 2009, the figures were well on their way to approaching 60% (58%) and this figure has now been reached (60%).

12.4 Feelings

The first experience of intercourse can be associated with many different feelings. Boys/young men and girls/young women differ in their answers here.

### Subjective Experience of First Intercourse

By gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing special</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something nice</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guilty conscience</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something unpleasant</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

The emotional situation is quite clear for boys/young men: three quarters of them described it as ‘something nice’, meaning that positive emotions are definitely dominant. Those who did not pick this answer most likely said that it was ‘nothing special’ (16%). Only a small number associate the

17 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
experience with negative feelings (‘something unpleasant’: 7%). A similar number report having had a guilty conscience about it (8%).

The answers given by the girls/young women are more spread out. Some of them also report conflicting feelings, in that they – much more than their male peers – pick several responses. Around half of the girls/young women saw the experience as something nice – a substantially smaller number than the boys/young men. For more than a quarter of the young women the experience was associated with negative feelings. 13% – that too is more than in the group of young men – had a guilty conscience. The percentage of girls/young women for whom it was nothing special was, at 20%, roughly the same as with the boys/young men.

**In detail.** Background only plays a small role in the description of the feelings about the first experience of intercourse. Gender is a much more dominant factor. However, there is one area where the girls/young women do differ by background: girls and young women with a migrant background are more likely to (also) have a guilty conscience, particularly if they are of Turkish background. This guilty conscience does not just manifest itself among those who were very young when they had their first sexual encounter; even if the girls/young women were older when they first had sexual intercourse, they were still more likely to feel guilty.

The best guarantee for a ‘nice’ first sexual experience is a steady relationship, and this is basically true for both sexes. However, for the boys and young men, positive experiences are still in the majority even if they did not know their partner or only knew her casually (61%), but they are not as common as when they first have sexual intercourse within a steady relationship (82%).

### Subjective Experience of First Intercourse

**Girls/young women by level of familiarity with the first sexual partner**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Steady relationship</th>
<th>Well known</th>
<th>Casual/unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing special</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something nice</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guilty conscience</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something unpleasant</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** How did you feel about the first time you had intercourse?

**Base:** 14–25-year-old girls/young women with heterosexual intercourse experience
Among the girls/young women the effects of a lack of familiarity are more dramatic. Even when the first sexual partner was ‘well known’ to them, fewer than half said the experience was ‘something nice’. Instead, they were almost twice as likely, compared to when they were in a steady relationship, to say ‘it was nothing special’. If the sexual partner was only a casual acquaintance or he was completely unknown beforehand, that percentage increases even further. Of the four possible answers ‘it was something nice’ is then the one that is chosen least often. Under these circumstances the first time had negative associations (‘something unpleasant’) for almost one in two of the girls/young women, and the guilty conscience is also more widespread. However, some of the girls also had a guilty conscience when they became sexually active for the first time within a steady relationship.

The attitude towards the first act of sexual intercourse is particularly closely correlated to the level of familiarity of the partner for the German girls/young women; the shift in their feelings is expressed more strongly for them than for the girls/young women with foreign roots.

What is startling for the girls/young women – and only for them – is that they respond differently about their first experience of intercourse, depending on whether we asked the adolescents or the young adults. The 18–25-year-old women are less likely to describe it retrospectively as ‘something nice’ (49% v. 60% for the 14–17-year-olds); instead, they are more likely to say it was ‘nothing special’ (22%/12%). This has nothing to do with the age at which they first had sex. Even if it occurred at the same age, the younger respondents are less likely to say ‘it was nothing special’. It would appear that the longer period of time that had passed between the event and now relativizes the attitudes.
12.5 Subjective thoughts about the timing of the first intercourse

The majority of adolescents and young adults – around 6 in 10 – feel that the time they had their first sexual experiences was just right. The German boys/young men are the most convinced by this (at just the right time: 67%).

Assessment of the Timing of the First Sexual Intercourse
By background

Beyond this majority, the responses go in different directions depending on gender. The female respondents were then most likely to say they had intercourse ‘somewhat too early’, some even said it was ‘much too early’; few said it had happened ‘rather late’. One third of the responses fall into the ‘too early’ category. The presence of a migrant background has no impact on this question.

German boys/young men focus more on the answer ‘rather late’. The boys/young men from migrant families are also more likely to choose this answer than their female counter-group, but they are generally somewhat more critical about their start into a sexually active life, because almost twice as many as their male German peers said the timing had been somewhat or much too early (together: 22% compared to 13% for the German boys/young men).

In detail. If first sexual encounters took place at age 14 or younger, the adolescents and young adults were often critical about that in retrospect. This is more strongly the case for the girls/young women than for boys/young men; a very much larger number now consider the time as ‘much too early’, while girls/young women from migrant families additionally have a high percentage of ‘somewhat too early’.
TABLE: Assessment of the age at which the respondents first had intercourse; here: responses 'somewhat' and 'much too early', if it occurred at age 14 or younger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First sexual intercourse at 14 was ...</th>
<th>Much too early</th>
<th>Somewhat too early</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German girls/young women</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women with a migrant background</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German boys/young men</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys/young men with a migrant background</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

If the respondents first had intercourse at age 15, the first sexual activities are subjectively already much more accepted. Among the girls/young women the percentages for ‘much too early’ drop dramatically, from 19%/22% (for age 14) to 7%/6%. However, the response ‘somewhat too early’ is still picked by 35%/39% of the girls/young women (with/without a migrant background).

If it happened at 16 or later, the response ‘much too early’ becomes the exception. The percentages who choose ‘somewhat too early’ are also lower now and continue to drop steadily as the age for the first time rises. By age 18 a larger percentage of the girls/young women already class the timing as ‘rather late’ (22% German background, 23% non-German background). If intercourse takes place for the first time even later than that, then the girls/young women from German families are particularly likely to feel it was ‘rather late’ (38%).

Boys/young men turn away from the assessment ‘too early’ far sooner than girls/young women. The German boys/young men only really cite ‘much too early’ if they first had intercourse at age 14 or younger. If it happened at age 15, few of the German boys/young men (13%) felt it had been ‘somewhat’ too early. Boys/young men with a migrant history judge in a more reserved manner: for them the assessment of ‘too early’ decreases more slowly with increasing age when they first had intercourse, but still faster than for the girls.

If they first had intercourse at age 17, many boys/young men – regardless of their background – felt this time was ‘rather late’. At 24%/22%, the figures for ‘rather late’ among the boys/young men who had sexual intercourse for the first time at age 17 are of an order that the girls/young women only reach if they first had intercourse at 18. One year later (at 18) the figures for the boys/young men have doubled to 45%/40%. Of the German boys/young men who were 19 or older when they became sexually active, the majority feel it was ‘rather late’ (57%).

The swing from ‘too early’ to ‘rather late’ therefore takes place a year earlier for the boys/young men than for the girls/young women. That can also be seen from the fact that the highest percentage of respondents saying the timing was ‘exactly right’ is with the 16-year-olds among the boys and young men (78%/74% depending on background), and among the 17-year-olds among the girls/young women (75%/71%). The standard for what is considered ‘normal’ here (because that is the basis for the evaluation of their own activities) is clearly lower for the boys/young men than for the girls/young women, even though they in actual fact become sexually active somewhat later than their female counterparts. The pressure of expectation is probably correspondingly high.
12.6 Who do young people tell about having intercourse for the first time?

Most adolescents – they were the only ones asked about their communicative behaviour since the circumstances surrounding their first time are still fresher – spoke with others about their first time shortly before or shortly after the event. Depending on gender and background, there are variations in the numbers who do not talk about it as well as in who they tell.

Only 13% of girls from German families said ‘I didn’t talk to anyone about it’, while the same was true for 26% of the German boys. The differences are not as marked for the adolescents with foreign roots (18%/22%).

**Who Do Young People Tell About Their First Time?**

**Girls by background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best friend</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other boys</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other girls</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t talk to anyone</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

**Girls.** The relationship patterns exhibited by the girls with and without a migrant background are basically very similar. For two thirds of the girls in both groups the best friend is the primary confidant(e). The mother comes second place, after quite a sizeable gap; she was more often a confidante for girls from German families (37%) than for girls from migrant families (26%). In third place finally is the partner with whom the girls experienced their first time; a quarter of the girls with and without a migrant background mention him as someone they (also) talked to about the first time.

Apart from the partner and the best friend, other peers are not told that often and if they are, they tend to be members of the same sex.

Other family members, other than the mother, play a role in the communication for some girls, but they turn much more strongly to their siblings (preferred: the sister) than to their father. Both are cited less often by girls with foreign roots. They appear to be more likely to take advantage of outside expertise by talking with their gynaecologist about their first time (16% v. 6% among German girls).
Who Do Young People Tell About Their First Time?
Boys by background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best friend</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other boys</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other girls</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t talk to</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
anyone

Multiple responses possible, in %

Boys. As was the case among the girls, the most common confidant(e) about the first time is someone of the same age, namely the best friend. However, the boys do not cite him (her) anywhere near as often (49%/50%) as the girls (65%/63%). Other peers the boys do not know well enough to call them best friends fill this gap somewhat to make up for the deficit to some extent; the boys also turn primarily to peers of their own sex.

Unlike the girls, the boys are less likely to confide in their parents – and if they do, then the mother and the father are admitted into their confidence to the same extent; that too is different to the girls, whose responses focus almost exclusively on the mother. But even taken together the father/mother are not as significant as the mother is for the girls. What the boys lack entirely is an adult confidant(e) with expert knowledge, the kind some of the girls find in their gynaecologist.

With regard to the role the girlfriend plays in connection to communicating about the first time, there are differences based on background. For German boys the partner is as significant as the boyfriend is for German girls (28%/26%). Boys with foreign roots struggle a bit more to communicate in their relationship because they are only half as likely to cite their girlfriend as someone with whom they spoke about the upcoming or recently occurred event (13%). This is surely largely the case because this group is more likely to have its first sexual experiences with a partner they know less well. Instead, they talked more often with their siblings, primarily their brother(s), than German boys (19% v. 8%).

Generally speaking, the boys with foreign roots found just as many opportunities to talk about their first time.
In detail. The age when the respondents experienced their first time has little impact on whether the adolescents spoke to someone about it beforehand or just afterwards. Around a quarter of the boys say 'I didn’t speak to anyone about it', regardless of whether they experienced their first time at age 14, 15 or 16. For the girls the differences are also minor with regard to when they had sex for the first time (maximum difference: 4 percentage points). However, the percentage who do not tell anyone is at a much lower level for them (between 12% an 16%, depending on age at the first time).

It is much rather the level of familiarity with the partner of the first time that reveals an impact on the communication about the event. This factor is particularly significant for girls. If they experienced their first time with a steady boyfriend, 12% did not tell anyone about the event. If they knew the boy well, it is 18%, and if the first sexual contact occurred with someone who they were casually acquainted with or did not know at all beforehand, the percentage goes up to 22%. There is no such connection for the boys. For them the percentage remains at around a quarter in all three groups.

If the first time took place within a steady relationship, i.e. the partner was very familiar, then the two sexes are most likely to discuss the events with their sexual partner himself/herself as well. At the same time, other peers become less important for boys, however, for girls the confidants outside of the relationship remain very important even when they had sexual intercourse for the first time with a boyfriend. At 30%/33% (girls/boys) the boyfriend/girlfriend is still not the primary confidant(e); the respondents were more likely to talk to their best friend (67%/44%) and the girls turn more commonly to their mother (35%).

Boys from migrant families are less likely to seek out a conversation with their partner than German boys when they experienced the first time within a steady relationship (23% v. 36%).
13 Increasing sexual experience
13.1 How long before intercourse takes place a second time?

Gap Between the First and Second Sexual Intercourse
By gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A few hours</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few days</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few weeks</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few months</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. half a year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. a year/longer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No second time yet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally speaking, the first act of sexual intercourse is not a one-off event. Instead, it marks the entry into a regular sex life. 65% of the boys/young men had sexual intercourse a second time within days or even hours of the first time. For the girls/young women the figure is almost as high at 60%. One difference: the boys/young men are more likely than the girls/young women to say 'a few hours', while the girls/young women are more likely than the boys/young men to have picked 'a few days'.

If we also include the respondents who had sexual intercourse for a second time a few weeks later, the first time did not remain a one-off experience for 80% to 83% of the adolescents/young adults.

The sexes do not differ with regard to the bigger gaps. And background does not play a role here either: once adolescents/young adults with foreign roots have become sexually active, they do not tend to leave it at the one time. Their responses match those of the respondents of German background.

In detail. If the first time took place under special circumstances, then a larger number of girls and boys had a bigger gap before having intercourse for a second time. One such factor is once again the level of familiarity with the sexual partner. Particularly among the girls/young women, but also among the boys/young men, the majority no longer continue their sexual activities within a few hours.
or days if they were only casually acquainted with their first sexual partner or did not know him/her at all. For 54% of the girls/young women and 37% of the boys/young men it took at least several months under these circumstances before they had sexual intercourse again, this time presumably with a different partner; a further 3% also said they had not yet had sexual intercourse again.

The relationship to the partner is more relevant in this context than the age at which the respondents first had sexual intercourse. And the differences depending on current age also reveal that the first time often was just not that long ago for the younger ones – in the 14–17-year-old age group between 4% and 8% say ‘no second time yet’, depending on gender and background, in the 18–25-year-old bracket it is only 1% in each case.

**Long-term trend comparison – German 18 14–17-year-olds**

Over the past 35 years, relatively little has changed with regard to the further development of sexual activities, once a first sexual intercourse has taken place. Then as now it is true that around four fifths of the girls and boys had a renewed sexual encounter within a maximum of a few weeks after the first time. Compared to the first survey in 1980, there are merely a few shifts between the categories ‘a few hours’, ‘a few days’ and ‘a few weeks’: in 1980 the percentage for ‘a few weeks’ was still 27% for the girls, currently it is 22% (boys: 25%/19%). That means that since then the gaps have shortened overall. Today, twice as many cited a repeat within a few hours (girls then: 4%, now: 8%; boys: 7%/15%). This is not, however, a completely new development of the current survey: even by 1994 the percentages for the answer ‘a few hours’ had doubled compared to the first survey in 1980 (1994: girls 8%, boys 13%).

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18 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
13.2 Frequency of sexual intercourse to date
13.2.1 Adolescents 14–17: frequency of sexual intercourse to date

Just how new the sexual experiences still are for the 14–17-year-olds is revealed by the responses when the adolescents are asked about how much sexual intercourse they have had to date in total. Only one third of the girls and a quarter of the boys say that they have had sexual intercourse more than 50 times.

Frequency of Sexual Intercourse to Date
14–17-year-olds by background

The answers also reveal that among the 14–17-year-olds it is still the girls who have more experience, even though the percentage of sexually experienced boys has come much closer to that of the girls (cf. ch. 11.3).

If we look at the German adolescents, they do not just differ with regard to the top category ‘more than 50 times’ as described above. The next category, ‘11–50 times’, is also chosen less often by the boys than by the girls (with a difference of 5 percentage points) so that the differences are increased even further. The number of boys who have only had little sexual intercourse to date, namely between 2 and 10 times, is 11 percentage points higher than for the girls (29% v. 18%).

Girls from foreign families have not had sexual intercourse as often as German girls. Their figures correspond to those of the German boys. Compared to the boys with a non-German background, they too are somewhat more experienced.
In detail. The percentages of respondents who have had sexual intercourse more than 50 times are somewhat higher among those who were sexually active early and among the older adolescents – neither of these findings is unexpected, since both groups can look back over a longer relevant period; this percentage was also higher among those who are currently in a steady relationship. The percentages always remain well below the 50% mark, however.

13.2.2 Young adults 18–25: regular sexual intercourse

It makes no sense to ask young adults, some of whom can look back on up to ten years of sexual activity, about how much sex they have had in their lives to date. However, in order to get an idea of what role sexual activities currently play in their lives, the young adults were asked whether they have sexual intercourse regularly or sporadically. The majority of the 18–25-year-olds are regularly sexually active – however, there is a sizable proportion among them where this is not the case (36% ‘only sometimes/occasionally’, 7% ‘never’). The crucial factor for regular sexual intercourse is that they are currently in a steady relationship.

For young adults who are in a steady relationship, sexual intercourse is generally speaking part of it (young women: 85%, men: 83%).

The situation is different for those who are not in a steady relationship. Most of them are sexually active too, but two thirds of these young adults only sometimes/occasionally. Of the remaining third,
around half say that they also have regular sexual intercourse without a steady partner, while the other half are currently not sexually active at all.

**In detail.** The categories are different, but with regard to the differences between gender and background, we see a similar picture to the question posed to the adolescents about how much sex they have had to date: young German women are the most active group; at 63% almost two thirds of them say they have sexual intercourse on a regular basis. Among the young German men the figure is also more than half, but fewer than among their female peers. The statements made by the young women from migrant families correspond to those of the German men, and for the young men with foreign roots the figure for those who are regularly sexually active even drops below the 50% mark: 42% say they have sexual intercourse on a regular basis, 49% say they do so sporadically and 9% say they currently have no sexual contacts – this is the highest percentage for this category of the four groups.

The majority of these differences can be explained by the fact that steady relationships differ in how widespread they are. Young men from migrant families in particular were most likely not to be in a steady relationship at the time of the survey (61%; young German men: 51%, young women with a migrant background: 52%, young German women: 35%).

### 13.2.3 Number of sexual partners to date

More than half of the sexually active girls between 14 and 17 have only been in a single relationship in their current sexually active lives. The proportion is somewhat lower for the boys, but is still more than 40%. The pattern changes for the two sexes in the 18–25 age bracket – many young adults have experiences with different sexual partners at this stage. Young women are more restrained with switching partners than young men. Even though girls/young women are sexually active somewhat more often and more regularly than boys/young men, it is nonetheless the latter who have a greater number of sexual contacts with different partners.
Number of Sexual Partners to date  
Comparison 14–17-year-olds/18–25-year-olds

Of course age, and the age at which someone first had sexual intercourse, have a big impact on the number of partners, but gender differences also remain.

Boys between the ages of 14 and 17 are much more likely than the girls to have had several partners (more than three partners: 20%/11%). *Within* the 14–17-year-old age span the statements about the number of partners are not that different, regardless of whether we look at 14/15-year-olds or 16/17-year-olds. In this age span of four years the most common answer is ‘one partner’.

Young adults between 18 and 25 on the other hand have most commonly had experience with at least three partners. On average half of the young men of this age have already had sexual intercourse with more than three partners; it is not quite so many among the young women. Comparing the age groups 18–20 and 21–25, the experiences with different sexual partners grow: the percentage choosing ‘more than three partners’ increases here by at least 20 points for both sexes.

**TABLE:** Number of sexual partners overall; here: answer ‘more than three partners’ by age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More than 3 partners</th>
<th>14-15 y.o.</th>
<th>16-17 y.o.</th>
<th>18-20 y.o.</th>
<th>21-25 y.o.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys/young men</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %
In detail. For non-German girls/young women a somewhat larger percentage remain with the first partner as the only one to date (31% v. 26% with German background). That figure is even higher among the sexually active young female Turks (56%). Other than that, the statements made by the girls/young women with and without a migrant background are largely the same.

For the boys/young men the most striking difference by background consists in the fact that young men with a migrant history are more likely to have already had more than three partners (56% v. 43%). More interesting than this average across the entire age spectrum of 14–25 is, however, the different sexual behaviour of the 14–17-year-olds. While more than half of the German boys between 14–17 have only had one sexual partner (52%), the boys with a migrant background do not exhibit such a strong bond even at this young age. Only around a quarter say their sexual contacts are limited to a single person. Many at this age have switched sexual partners several times:

| TABLE: Number of sexual partners – 14–17-year old boys with/without migrant background |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 14–17-year-old boys             | One partner | Two partners | Three partners | More than three |
| German background               | 52      | 25       | 10       | 13       |
| Migrant background              | 24      | 27       | 13       | 37       |

The relationship status has an impact on this question too of course. One indication that the male respondents from migrant families are less likely to be in relationships is the fact that even the first time they had intercourse (and even more so among the younger respondents), it was less likely to have taken place within a steady relationship. The larger number of sexual partners also correlates with the fact that boys with a migrant background become sexually active earlier than German boys.

One of the clearest correlations in any case exists between age at first sexual intercourse and the number of sexual partners to date: the younger the adolescents were when they first had sex, the more likely it is that they have already had many different partners; the older they were, the greater the proportion of respondents who have only had one sexual partner (their first). That is of course also connected to the fact that those who became sexually active early have had more time in which to have sexual experiences.

However, even the very first experiences turn out to be a relevant factor. Those who were not very familiar with their first sexual partner also display a less constant partner behaviour in their subsequent sex lives. This does not just relate to the fact that fewer adolescents/young adults in this group stuck with a single sexual partner – that would not be surprising; no, they have experienced far more partner changes: 59% of the girls/young women and 57% of the boys/young men whose first sexual partner was largely a stranger have had experiences with more than three different sexual partners.

To compare: if the first sexual partner was a steady boyfriend/girlfriend, then the corresponding figures are merely 30% of the girls/young women (i.e. half as many) and 41% of the boys/young men (16 percentage points fewer).
**Long-term trend comparison –German 19 14–17-year-olds**

It is no more than a tendency (as yet), but we can currently witness a tendency among the 14–17-year-old girls and boys to stick to a single partner for sexual contacts. Between 2009 and today the percentages for this answer have gone up for both sexes (by 5 and 3 percentage points).

However, girls and boys come from different starting positions.

**Girls.** Among the girls there was for a while a tendency towards more than one partner, which reached its peak in 2005. At the time only 44% of the girls said they had had sex with only one partner to date; that is the lowest figure measured over the 35-year period. There was already a turn towards the opposite direction in the last survey in 2009. And this turn is expressed even more clearly in the current data. Today, 53% (and therefore more than half) of the girls now say again they have only been sexually active with one partner; this is the highest figure measured after 1980 and 1994, with 51% each. The difference between 51% and 53% is not statistically significant, but at least we can say that the starting level of the first survey has been reached again.

**Boys.** In the trend since 1980 the current figure of 43% is the highest ever for the answer ‘one partner’ for the boys. In the overall development, the percentage who have only had intercourse with one sexual partner to date has gone up steadily, apart from one outlier in 1994. The 1994 percentage was 39%, still 10 percentage points more than in 1980. This level could not (yet) be maintained in subsequent years; from 1998 (33%) it rose only slowly but continuously to the figure currently reached.
Over the more than 30 years during which these trends have been measured, there has always been one group that have had many different sexual partners even at a young age, both among the girls and the boys. For the girls this percentage fluctuates between 10% and 15% (currently: 11%) and for the boys it is twice that, between 19% and 26% (currently: 20%).

13.2.4 Sexual fidelity within a relationship

Sexual fidelity is very important within a relationship for young adults between the ages of 18 and 25. Young women are very convinced by the notion that sexual fidelity is absolutely necessary within a relationship. Hardly any of them think the demand for sexual fidelity is wrong (3%). The young men share that opinion (‘demand is wrong’: 4%), but they are more likely to keep a back door open – or have already had such experiences? – by declaring sexual fidelity more often as ‘desirable’, but not directly as absolutely necessary (67%), as the women do (80%).

In detail. Those who have only confronted the concept of sexual fidelity in theory, i.e. those who have not yet had sexual intercourse, are all the more convinced that it is a necessary factor in a relationship. Among the young women and men of non-German background that becomes very clear (difference from the sexually experienced: plus 14 and 10 percentage points respectively); however, even among the German women there is such a tendency (plus 5 points). Only the young men from German families are not influenced in their responses by their own sexual experiences.
It also becomes clear that when a close religious tie is present, the model of a monogamous relationship has above-average approval. At least 91% of young women with such a close tie choose ‘absolutely necessary’, regardless of whether they are Catholic, Protestant or Muslim. The young men with close religious ties do not reach these proportions, but the percentage is still 10 points higher than the average.

Those who are currently in a steady relationship are also somewhat more likely to affirm the absolute necessity than those who are currently single.

Once again we see differences depending on the type of relationship in which the young women surveyed first experienced sexual intercourse: if they were unfamiliar with their first sexual partner, only 66% say sexual fidelity is an absolute necessity, while a small group of them dismiss the idea entirely (‘demand is wrong’: 9%). If the first sexual partner was a steady boyfriend, then 83% are firm in saying sexual fidelity is absolutely necessary.
14 Contraceptive behaviour
14.1 For the first sexual intercourse
14.1.1 No contraception the first time

There is (still) a small group of young people who we should give special attention to, as they did not use any contraception the first time they had intercourse. At 8%, the number of 14–25-year-olds who did not use contraception on this occasion is not that great, but we must not forget that the percentages are substantially higher in individual subgroups.

Both gender and background have an impact: boys/young men are less likely to use contraception than girls/young women. Adolescents/young adults with foreign roots are also less likely to use contraception than their German counterparts. To compare, the percentage of respondents who did not use contraception is lowest for the German girls/young women (6%) and highest for the boys/young men with a migrant background (13%). Girls/young women with a migrant background and boys/young men with a German background lie in between these figures, both at 9%.

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In detail. More crucial than the markers gender and background are other factors, foremost the level of familiarity with the first sexual partner.

Factor of familiarity with the partner. One the main risk factors is having sexual intercourse for the first time outside of a steady relationship or not even with a good friend, and instead with an at best casual acquaintance. If that is the case, then the figures for unprotected sex quickly rise to 22% for the male respondents and 15% for the female respondents. To recap: this affects 10% of the girls/young women and 17% of the boys/young men; they hardly knew their first sexual partner.
No Contraception the First Time
By level of familiarity with the first sexual partner

Girls/young women with a migrant background think about contraception during the first time even under the poor conditions of an unsteady relationship: only 9% of them do not use contraception in such an event.

The age at which the respondents had sexual intercourse for the first time also has an impact, because those who were very young (14 or younger) were also more likely not to have used contraception. For adolescents with a migrant background this correlates with the fact that they did not know or only casually knew the partner with whom they had sexual intercourse for the first time.

**Factor of education.** The second relevant factor is education. Gender and background have an influence on the dimensions, but the fundamental finding is that the percentage of respondents who do not use contraception the first time falls with increasing levels of education.

Among the respondents with a low qualifications (non-academic secondary school), the percentage who do not use contraception is in double figures for both sexes (girls/young women: 12%, boys/young men: 17%). In the event of a middling level of education (middle school or comparable) the percentages have already decreased to 10%/9% not using contraception for the first time. For those with higher levels of education (18+ school-leaving certificate), the percentages are very small, particularly for the girls/young women, but also for the boys/young men (3%/7%).
No Contraception the First Time
By education

The greatest differences correlated with education can be found for the boys/young men with a migrant background: almost a quarter of those with low levels of education did not use contraception the first time (23%); the figure drops by a third when the level of education is middling, and when the level of education is high, this figure is then halved again. However, the circumstances here are more complex than they appear at first glance, because students attending a non-academic secondary school have sex substantially earlier than young people from higher educational backgrounds, meaning they are younger when they have intercourse for the first time. And those who had sexual experiences early on quite generally display poorer contraceptive behaviour the first time.

Factor of age group. It is also noteworthy that it is not the 14–17-year-olds who are more likely to say they did not use contraception the first time, it is the young adults. For the boys/young men the difference between the age groups 14–17 and 18–25 is 4 percentage points, regardless of family background; for the girls/young women with a migrant history this difference is no less than 8 points. The exception lies with young German women, whose contraceptive behaviour is better than that of the girls.

The differences between the age groups is surprising at first, since it is not the case that the now 18–25-year-olds were much more likely to have sex at 14 or younger than the current adolescent generation. This permits two suppositions: either the current adults were less diligent about contraception when they had sex for the first time – an event that is now further back in the past – and therefore there has been a positive development in this area in recent years, or the 18–25-year-olds now include different groups of people, groups who are less diligent about contraception. There is evidence in favour of either possibility, or both.
The trend comparison for the 14–17 age group confirms that adolescents with a migrant background and German boys are better at using contraception today than they were ten years ago. Between 2005 and 2009 in particular there was a clear change, which has continued between 2009 and 2014.

No Contraception the First Time
Trend, 14–17-year-olds

We can also say from the current figures that those who first had intercourse at age 19 or later are no better at using contraception than the very young survey participants. The exception here too comes from the young women from German families – the older they are the first time they have sex, the better they are at using contraception.

TABLE: No contraception during first time, did nothing, by age at first time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First time at ...</th>
<th>14 or younger</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19 or older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German girls/young women</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women with a migrant background</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German boys/young men</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys/young men with a migrant background</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %
For the young women with a migrant background, the group who had sex for the first time at age 18 stand out: they were not particularly diligent about contraception the first time. Indeed, the group composition among the girls/young women with a migrant background differs when comparing those with early sexual experiences (14 or younger) with those who were older. In the group of respondents with early sexual experiences the girls/young women from other countries in the EU dominate. There are almost no Turkish girls/young women in it. They only become sexually active at an older age. At 12%, the percentage of Turkish girls/young women who did not use contraception is then slightly higher than the group average of 9%. However, it is hardly possible to make definitive statements since the case numbers are quite small – many of the girls/young women with a migrant background are not yet sexually active.

Other factors. It can generally be said that girls/young women with a migrant background, and who were not born in Germany, were less likely to use contraception the first time than the average (14%; group average: 9%). They are also the ones who make use of coitus interruptus as a (last?) resort in order to prevent a pregnancy (9%, group average: 5%).

For the girls/young women the difference between west Germany and east Germany is noteworthy (5%/11% not using contraception).

For both the male and the female adolescents and young adults, and regardless of migrant background, support received in the home has an impact on contraceptive behaviour: in the homes where sexuality and contraception is discussed, contraception works better for the first time.

### TABLE: No contraception the first time by contraceptive advice given by the parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents gave contraceptive advice</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German girls/young women</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women with a migrant background</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German boys/young men</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys/young men with a migrant background</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figures in %**

**Long-term trend – German**

**Girls.** Looking back over the past three and a half decades, the number of girls not using contraception, now at 8%, is as low as it was five years ago and far away from the result of the first survey: in 1980 the figure was 20%, i.e. two and a half times higher than today.

**Boys.** Generally speaking the development is even more positive for the boys, since they started with an even worse figure: in 1980 29% said they had done nothing in the contraceptive area. That made the number of boys not using contraception bigger than those using condoms. The current figure of 6% is the lowest figure measured to date and is even below that of the girls, but first and foremost it confirms the 2009 level (8%). After decades of double-digit figures for those not using contraception – even in the 2005 survey it was 15% – we finally seem to have reached a lasting percentage under 10% for the boys, a favourable development.

---

20 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
No Contraception the First Time
Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

Up until the year 2005, the percentage of boys who said they did not use contraception was (almost) always a fair bit higher than that of the girls. In recent years there have been virtually no gender-based differences in this area.
14.1.2 Application of contraceptive methods

For the initial foray into a sexually active life, condoms are still the contraceptive of choice. Almost three quarters of the 14–25-year-olds with sexual experience say they used a condom the first time.

![Contraception the First Time](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contraceptives used</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condoms</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pill</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

However, even the pill is used surprisingly often for the first time, in half of the cases on average. However, this is truer for the behaviour of the adolescents and young adults of German background. For those with a non-German background this is only (or at least?) a good third.

It has to be said that many adolescents/young adults use the opportunity to cite more than one contraceptive. As a result, the high number of citations of the pill and condoms presumably means that countless adolescents and young adults wanted to be ‘on the safe side’ the first time and used two forms of contraception – the pill to avoid a pregnancy, and condoms to avoid sexually transmitted infections.

Forms of contraception other than condoms and the pill only play a subordinate role the first time the young people have intercourse. All other mentions together only amount to 7% – and even this figure needs to be relativized since some of them are used in combination, including with the pill or condoms. A more differentiated depiction is not necessary since the individual methods are only cited between 0% and 3%. The contraceptives summarized under ‘other’ are: hormonal methods other than the traditional contraceptive pill (e.g. NuvaRing, hormonal coil), the copper coil, diaphragm, chemical contraceptives, knowledge of the infertile days based on various methods, as well as pulling out (coitus interruptus).
Contraception the First Time
By background

Contraceptives used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoms</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pill</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

Fig. 87

Gender and background comparison. The differences based on gender are smaller than those based on background. For respondents of both sexes it is the case that they have a different attitude towards the pill depending on their background. Girls/young women and boys/young men without a migrant background are much more likely to use the pill for the first time (51%/50% v. 37%/35%).

The use of ‘other’ contraceptives is also background-specific: they are cited somewhat more often by adolescents/young adults of non-German background.

Girls/young women generally pay more attention to contraceptives being used and they are somewhat more likely to cite condoms than the male respondents. The young German women are particularly likely to (also) cite condoms compared to those with non-German roots. Among the boys/young men, differences with regard to condom use are barely present.

In detail. The older the girls and boys are when they have sexual intercourse for the first time, the more likely they are to already use the pill the first time, although this does not mean that condoms are used less. The group who become sexually active late (first time at 19 or older) are, however, the exception to the rule: in this comparatively small group, the percentage that already used the pill for the first time decreases again.

The majority of the adolescents and young adults who used the pill for their first time already use the belt-and-braces approach of pill and condoms; depending on the age they were when they first had sex, the percentage of combination users varies between around 60% and 75%.
Contraception the First Time
Combined use of pill/condoms as well as the pill overall, by age at first sex

There are also regional differences: girls and young women from west Germany are more likely to cite condoms as the contraceptive of choice for the first time. However, they do not use the condom as an alternative, they use it in addition: the combined use is more widespread in west Germany than in the east. The greater east German affinity to the pill, such as could be observed in the years after reunification, does not exist anymore; in both parts of the country the pill is used to approximately the same extent for the first time.

If the first intercourse took place within the context of a steady relationship, then the pill is also often the contraceptive of choice right from the start. This is more clearly the case for the girls/young women in this context than for the boys/young men. However, it is not the case that this group relies on the pill alone for the first time: the combined use together with a condom is particularly common.

Among the not very widespread ‘other’ contraceptives, coitus interruptus is cited the most often. Among respondents with foreign roots it is cited by 5%, among German adolescents and young adults by 2%.

**Long-term trend – German**

The contraceptive behaviour of German adolescents has changed substantially in recent decades. That is true both with regard to the fundamental question of contraception – use of no contraception as well as the choice of the contraceptive used – and – as a newer development – the increasing combined use of contraceptives.

---

21 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
Contraception the First Time
Long-term trend, condom use among German 14–17-year-olds

34 years ago condoms were only the preferred contraceptive for the first time for around a third of the 14–17-year-old girls (and even fewer boys). 15 years later, in 1994, the percentage had doubled; two thirds of the girls said they used condoms the first time. In the 1980s the HIV/AIDS problem increasingly found its way into the public consciousness and resulting campaigns advertised condoms as a protective against sexually transmitted infections, which will have contributed to this shift. Over the next ten years condom use stagnated with slight fluctuations at around 65%. Boys initially stayed behind the girls somewhat, but then settled in at around two thirds.

In the survey year 2005 there was a further increase in condom use. At this time the girls crossed the 70% mark for the first time and four years later the boys did too. The current figures confirm these dimensions once again. Today, in 2014, 75% of all girls and boys who have had sexual intercourse cite condoms as a contraceptive for the first time.

However, it is not just condoms that have seen increases over the decades. The percentage of respondents who have used the pill from the beginning of their sex lives has gone up, not as rapidly but steadily. It is the first time that the figure here has reached the 50% mark for German 14–17-year-old girls; it is above 40% for the German boys.
Contraception the First Time
Combined use of the pill/condoms as well as the pill overall,
Trend girls

A double strategy is being employed more and more: the majority of pill users now combine the pill and condoms, an indication of the fact that in addition to the desire to prevent a pregnancy, HIV prevention is a more common consideration.

Besides condoms and the pill, other contraceptive methods are insignificant as first-time contraceptives. In the mid-1990s, the situation was somewhat different; at the time 16% and 11% respectively (girls/boys) still relied on alternative contraceptives.
Contraception the First Time
Long-term trend, German girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Condoms</th>
<th>The pill</th>
<th>Chemical contraceptives</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

Question: What did you and/or your partner do, the first time you had sex, in order to prevent a pregnancy?
Base: 14-17-year-old girls with German citizenship/from 2014: background, with heterosexual intercourse experience

Contraception the First Time
Long-term trend, German boys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Condoms</th>
<th>The pill</th>
<th>Chemical contraceptives</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

Question: What did you and/or your partner do, the first time you had sex, in order to prevent a pregnancy?
Base: 14-17-year-old boys with German citizenship/from 2014: background, with heterosexual intercourse experience
The shift becomes particularly clear when the figures are compared with the survey of 1980. In those days chemical contraceptives were still more widespread in their application than the pill, and the more questionable methods such as the temperature method or coitus interruptus made up a sizable percentage of the contraceptive methods. When taken together, the figures were 38%/36% – today they are a mere 4%/5% (girls/boys).

The decline in the use of unsafe methods is parallel to the decline in the percentage of respondents not using contraception, so it is not just that the one is being replaced by the other.

**Gender comparison: trend.** Over the survey period of 34 years the contraceptive behaviour exhibited by girls and boys has converged more and more. In one area, however, we can see tendencies to a renewed drifting apart in their behaviours: the 14–17-year-old German girls place a greater emphasis on the pill as a contraceptive than the boys (difference: 6 percentage points) and they do this more commonly in combination with condoms (difference in combined use: 8 percentage points).
14.1.3 Reasons for not using contraception the first time

Even a first glance at the figure below, it becomes clear that non-use of contraception is largely the result of one (main) reason: ‘it happened too spontaneously’. The young people were not prepared for the situation. As a result they were not able to take the necessary preventive measures. Two thirds of the boys/young men gave this as a reason why they did not use contraception and the same was true for not quite as many of the girls/young women (but still substantially more than half of them).

In addition there is evidence for naïve optimism: ‘it’ll be alright’ and ‘we wanted to be careful’ were collectively chosen by around a third.

There are various other factors that are not of any great significance as individual aspects. In any case, it is the norm that several reasons are given: boys/young men and girls/young women give an average of 1.6 reasons when explaining why they did not use contraception.

Reasons for Not Using Contraception the First Time

By gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It happened too spontaneously</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’ll be alright</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of alcohol, drugs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No contraception at hand</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too scared to address it</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought I could rely on my partner</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We wanted to be careful</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know why we didn’t use contraception</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All answers that received >5%
Multiple responses possible, in %

Comparison to 2009. Compared to the previous survey, there is a concentration for both sexes on the two cited main reasons mentioned above. Gender-specific reasons cited more by the female respondents (‘no contraception at hand’, ‘too scared to address it’) or by the male respondents (‘influence of alcohol, drugs’, ‘thought I could rely on my partner’, ‘didn’t know enough’), as occurred in 2009 do not exist in this way in 2014.

This is probably less the result of an altered response behaviour than of the fact that the current database is larger thanks to the expanded subject set that now includes 18–25-year-olds. The greater
the case numbers, the more reliable the data and the smaller the role of chance fluctuations. The number of the female and male adolescents and young adults who did not use contraception during the first time is \( n=126 / n=120 \) and therefore twice the size of what it was in 2009. However, it is still not really big enough to make any further analyses in detail.

What can be said is that the influence of drugs and alcohol plays the biggest role in spontaneous sexual relationships – presumably already as a supporting factor bringing about the sexual intercourse and then definitely in the lack of contraception. Almost 30% of the respondents who did not know their sexual partner well cited (among other things) the influence of drugs and alcohol as a reason for the lack of precaution. Steady relationships also see unprotected sexual intercourse for the first time, though more rarely, and in this context the influence of drugs and alcohol is very low.
14.2 Contraception with increasing experience  
14.2.1 Contraceptive behaviour: specific occasions compared

Over time, with increasing experience, the respondents’ contraceptive behaviour changes. Depending on gender and background, the speed at which these changes take place varies, but the fundamental statements are true for all those with sexual intercourse experience:

- Generally speaking contraception is used from the second time at the latest; the number of respondents who do nothing by way of contraception is decreased compared to the first time.
- Condom use is customary in the early phase for many 14–17-year-olds, not just for the first time but also for the second time.
- Over time condoms become less important as a contraceptive and are increasingly replaced by the pill.
- Comparing the first/most recent sexual intercourse, there is a reversal in the figures: condoms are used 70% of the time for the first sexual intercourse, whereas for the most recent sexual intercourse it is the pill that is used to that extent.

**Contraceptive Behaviour with Increasing Experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First sexual intercourse</th>
<th>Second sexual intercourse</th>
<th>Most recent sexual intercourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No contraception</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoms</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pill</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of ‘other’ contraceptives/contraceptive methods used is of secondary significance. Regardless of what occasion we look at, it never, on average, exceeds the 10% mark. The percentage for ‘other’ is lowest for the second time. That is because coitus interruptus is still used as a last contraceptive resort for the first time. For the most recent sexual intercourse the number of other contraceptives is somewhat higher again because some of the respondents cite the IUD (coil) (2%), they also cite ‘other hormonal methods’, i.e. not the contraceptive pill, such as the NuvaRing, implants, injections and the like (4%, not defined in more detail).
When comparing the genders, the biggest differences exist for the most recent sexual intercourse.

**Contraceptive Behaviour with Increasing Experience**

**By gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First sexual intercourse</th>
<th>Second sexual intercourse</th>
<th>Most recent sexual intercourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoms</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pill</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** What did you and/or your partner do, the first/second/most recent time you had sex, in order to prevent a pregnancy?

**Base:** 14–25-year-olds who have had multiple heterosexual intercourse experience

For the first time, the pill is cited by the female and male respondents to the same extent. However, there are differences with regard to condom use (difference of 6 percentage points) – that is mainly because boys/young men are somewhat more likely to not use contraception for the first time.

For the second time the boys/young men have reached the same level as the girls/young women with regard to condom use. However, the girls/young women were more likely to (also) have used the pill for the second time (difference: 8 percentage points).

For the most recent sexual intercourse three quarters of the girls/young women have completed the switch to the pill. Only around 40% still use condoms and in two out of three cases they do so in conjunction with the pill. According to the statements made by the male respondents, the use of the pill as a contraceptive for the most recent sexual intercourse is significantly higher than at first, but still less than according to the statements of the girls/young women. At the same time more than half still use condoms (13-point difference between the sexes). And: more boys/young men than girls/young women say that they used nothing but condoms for the most recent sexual intercourse (23% v. 13%).

The double strategy, using both condoms and the pill, reaches its peak for the second time. Around a third of the 14–17-year-olds and the 18–25-year-olds used both options for their second time. After that the rate decreases again, substantially so for the girls/young women (second/most recent sexual intercourse: 37%/26%), and in tendency for the boys/young men (33%/30%).
Girls/young women by background. The main difference between girls/young women with and without a migrant background relates to the different degrees to which they use the contraceptive pill. For the first and second time German girls/young women are 14 percentage points more likely to have used it. This gap becomes smaller for the most recent sexual intercourse, but continues to exist. The combined use of condoms and the pill is also more widespread among the German girls/young women than among the girls/young women with a migrant background.

Contraceptive Behaviour With Increasing Experience
Girls/young women by background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First sexual intercourse</th>
<th>Second sexual intercourse</th>
<th>Most recent sexual intercourse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No contraception</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoms</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pill</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No contraception</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoms</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pill</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boys/young men by background. As was the case among the girls/young women, there is also a differing level of affinity to the pill among the male respondents depending on their background. In contrast to the girls/young women, the differences emerge more, the longer they have been sexually active. Even for the most recent sexual intercourse only one in two with a non-German background said the contraceptive pill was used, whereas among the German boys/young men it is 71%, i.e. almost one and a half times as many.

Instead, condoms continue to remain more important for boys/young men with a migrant background with increasing experience. This becomes even clearer when comparing how many use condoms as the sole contraceptive: this was the case for 36% of the boys/young men with a migrant background for their most recent sexual intercourse, but only for 19% of the German boys/young men.
Contraceptive Behaviour With Increasing Experience
Boys/young men by background

The number of respondents not using any contraception decreases in both groups after the first time, but unfortunately the contraceptive behaviour of the boys/young men with a migrant background remains at a worse level than that of the German boys/young men. For the most recent sexual intercourse 8% did not use any contraception, whereas the same is true for only 3% of the German boys/young men.

**In detail.** The comparison depending on the extent of sexual experiences for the 14–17-year-old age group confirms again quite clearly how important condoms are in the early phase of young people’s sex lives. The longer a sex life is ongoing, the more condom use decreases.

**TABLE: Condom use among 14–17-year-olds during the most recent sexual intercourse by amount of sexual intercourse to date**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condom used</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Of these, used as a sole contraceptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse up to 10 times</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–50 times sexual intercourse</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse more than 50 times</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %
The relationship situation also has a strong influence on whether condoms were used during the most recent sexual intercourse. Condoms continue to remain of great significance for those who do not have a steady partner. 72% of boys/young men without a girlfriend used a condom for their most recent sexual intercourse, half of them as the sole contraceptive, half of them in combination with the pill. Among boys/young men with a girlfriend the percentage is just 37% and for around a third of them it was the sole contraceptive.

The statements made by the girls/young women with a partner largely correspond to the male respondents. Girls/young women without a steady partner, however, also focus on the pill (66%) and less on condoms (59%) even though the girls/young women without a partner use condoms more often than when they are in a steady relationship.

**TABLE: Contraception during the most recent sexual intercourse; here: condom use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condom used</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Of these, used as a sole contraceptive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys/young men without a partner</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys/young men with a partner</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women without a partner</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls/young women with a partner</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

Among the boys/young men with a migrant background the Turkish (equally so the Muslim) adolescents and young adults are more likely to use condoms for their most recent sexual intercourse than the pill (72%; average among the boys/young men with a migrant background: 60%, among the boys/young men overall: 54%), the majority of them rely solely on condoms.

Turkish adolescents and young adults, both male and female, tend to accept no contraception somewhat more often than the average of all the non-German respondents.

There are virtually no differences in contraceptive behaviour based on education with regard to what contraceptives are chosen. However, it is not just the case for the first time (here with the clearest differences), but also for subsequent times that respondents with a higher level of education are less likely than respondents with a low level of education to use no contraception at all. The boundary here runs between middling education (year 10 or equivalent) and higher levels of education (at least qualifications allowing entry into university).
Long-term trend comparison – German 14–17-year-olds

Just as contraceptive behaviour for the first time has fundamentally changed over the past decades, contraception itself has been subject to changes with increasing experience. The most pleasing result: contraceptive awareness is now shaped by a greater sense of responsibility, not just upon embarking on a sexually active life but also subsequently, than it was in the early 1980s.

No/Unsafe Contraception for Most Recent Sexual Intercourse

Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds

For the German boys we can see an unabated, high level of contraceptive conscientiousness, just like in the 2009 survey.

Among the German girls, the percentage who did not use contraception for the most recent sexual intercourse or who used unsafe/questionable methods, the figure is currently 6% and therefore higher than in 2009 and 1998. However, the figures do not suggest that there is a trend to greater recklessness in longer-term contraception; the differences are just too small. The girls are not far away from their starting level. However, we shall need to keep an eye on this development.

Other than that, the altered behaviour continues, as we already saw for the first occasion. With increasing sexual intercourse, the pill becomes the obvious contraceptive of choice more and more clearly. In the early eighties chemical contraceptives were still widespread; today they are practically insignificant (1980: 15% of the boys, 13% of the girls; today: less than 0.5% for both).

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22 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
14.2.2 Reasons for choosing the most recent contraceptive

The young adults of 18 and older, where we can assume that most are sexually experienced and where some of them can look back over a longer period of experience with contraception, were also asked why they chose the most recent contraceptive method they used.

There is a single reason in the foreground, one that is mentioned by at least three in four of the 18–25-year-olds who are sexually active and using contraception: first and foremost the contraception has to prevent a pregnancy. Besides this reliability, it is also important to women and men that the use of the contraceptive is simple. This motive comes in second place way ahead of the other reasons in the rankings. In addition there are a wide variety of other reasons that made the particular contraceptive seem appropriate. Overall, from the spectrum of eleven answers presented to the young adults, nine of them are cited by at least 20% of the respondents; on average they give 3.5 reasons.

Generally speaking it makes more sense to distinguish by the contraceptive used, rather than by gender, because the reasons for why a contraceptive was used are naturally associated with the particular features of that contraceptive. The figure below therefore depicts the responses given by the users of the two main contraceptives, the pill and condoms, without any distinction by gender. The respondents who cited both methods are not shown here, as it is not possible to tell which reason applies to which contraceptive in that circumstance.
It becomes clear at first glance that the pill and condoms are chosen for different reasons. There is only one aspect that is cited to the same extent by both user-groups: the argument of agreeability. Overall, the respondents gave somewhat more reasons why they used the pill for their most recent sexual intercourse than they gave for condoms.

The particular advantage of the pill is that it does not impair sensation during sexual intercourse; it is here that the pill has the greatest lead ahead of condoms. However, more respondents also felt it was safer and more convenient to use (a plus of approx. 20 percentage points each). Otherwise it is often the result of a doctor’s recommendation (35%).

Condom users focused more on the fact that in addition to the birth control function, it also provided additional protection against sexually transmitted infections, that it could be used spontaneously, and that it was easy to obtain. One in three also cited price as a reason.

**In detail.** In some aspects there are different arguments in the ‘used the pill’ and ‘used condoms’ camp depending on gender. The young women who used the pill for their most recent sexual experience are more likely to cite agreeability (plus 16 percentage points compared with young men who used the pill during their most recent sexual encounter). For 45% of the young women it was also significant that the method chosen was recommended by a doctor. This reason is only cited by half as many men; however, since this form of contraception is taken by the women, it is only logical that men would cite this reason less often. From a male perspective the pill was often used because their partner wanted that (24%). The reverse, that women said they used the pill because it was their partner’s wish, is much rarer (6%).

The good (or better) agreeability is also an argument used by the young women if they only used condoms. Almost one in two cite this reason (47%), whereas only one in four young men do (26%). The ‘additional protection against STIs’ is also emphasized more by the female condom-only users than by their male counterparts (plus 10 percentage points).

The young men are more likely to use the more general safety argument (plus 8 points) – for them condoms were used more often at their partner’s request (12%). Here too the reverse is rare (5%). From that we can indirectly conclude that the choice of contraceptive is determined to a greater extent by the women, something which is confirmed by the direct question about the distribution of responsibilities regarding contraception (see ch. 14.2.3).

Overall it stands out that young women are more likely than young men to cite several reasons for why they used the contraceptive they did. That too explains why individual answers were given more frequently by the women.

By the way, those who use both methods, the pill and condoms (and this is not a small group), stand apart from the pill-only and condom-only users by a particularly well developed need for safety: both the reason that this would provide safer and more reliable contraception and, additionally, protection against STIs were cited more than average.

The respondents who do not have a steady partner have somewhat different priorities in their justifications than those in a steady relationship. However, that is also connected to the fact that outside of a steady relationship condoms are used more often, which is why the particular advantages of condoms stand out more.

The priorities of young men and women with and without a migrant background are broadly the same. Young German men emphasize the safety aspect a bit more (difference: 8 percentage points).
Young men of non-German background care somewhat more than their German counterparts that their contraceptive is easy to obtain (difference: 8 percentage points). For the young women there is only one aspect of note: young German women emphasize the familiarity and experience with the contraceptive used to a greater extent (difference: 9 points).

The responses hardly differ when we break them down by education. There is one notable feature, though: it is more important to the respondents with a higher level of education (18+ school-leaving certificate or university) than to others that their contraceptive does not impair sensation during sexual intercourse. Women seem even more sensitive in this regard than men, however, the educational difference remains for both groups.

14.2.3 Responsibility for contraception within a relationship

The current survey asked for the first time which partner in the relationship is responsible for the contraception: ‘Which one of you is responsible for contraception? Who takes care of it? Who acquires it, who pays for it, etc.?’

More than half of the sexually active adolescents and young adults display a sense of responsibility with their response – ‘both of us’ said 60% of the boys/young men and 54% of the girls/young women who are currently in a steady relationship.
Other than that, the distribution of responses confirms what we have been able to glean from the questions about the contraception used. *If* only one of the two partners is responsible for contraception, then that responsibility is generally held by the female partner. The girls/young women say so about themselves and the responses given by the boys/young men also express that sentiment.

**In detail.** Whether the women or the men are responsible for contraception – part of it comes from to what extent the contraceptive requires more female activity (pill) or male activity (condoms). The person using the contraceptive is therefore also primarily responsible. Where condoms play a bigger role – among the younger respondents for example, or among those who have only had sexual intercourse a few times and are therefore still using condoms or the pill-plus-condoms – the percentage pointing to the male partner as someone who is responsible/co-responsible is higher. The shift of responsibility towards the girlfriend with increasing levels of sexual activity is illustrated particularly clearly among the 14–17-year-old boys:

**TABLE: Responsibility for contraception – 14–17-year-old boys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of SI ...</th>
<th>Up to 10 times</th>
<th>11–50 times</th>
<th>More than 50 times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My girlfriend</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We both are</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

In line with this, Turkish adolescents (who are more likely to use condoms) also place the responsibility with the male partner more often than their German counterparts – but they are less likely to place the responsibility with both partners.

However, the latter fact could point to a different connexion: adolescents/young adults who come from a home where contraception is discussed are much more likely to exhibit a sense of (co-)responsibility in the relationship. If this is not the case, then both sexes are less likely to choose the answer ‘we are both responsible’.
14.2.4 Experience with different contraceptives

The range of experiences the sexually active adolescents and young adults have with the various contraceptives is greater than their statements about the individual concrete instances of contraception would let on. Almost everyone has already used condoms, and the pill also approaches or crosses the 90%-mark. The latter is true to a slightly lesser extent for adolescents and young adults with a migrant background (80% mark).

**Experience with Different Contraceptives**

By background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contraceptive</th>
<th>Percentage (Female)</th>
<th>Percentage (Male)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condoms</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pill</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coitus Interruptus</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploitation of infertile days</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical contraceptives</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUD</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfortunately the diverse knowledge also extends to contraceptive methods that have to be classed as unsafe or very dubious. ‘Stopping intercourse in time’ is something three in ten German, and four in ten non-German, adolescents and young adults have already done, while between 12% and 18% rely on exploiting infertile days or on the temperature method.

Only the older respondents were asked to what extent they have used hormonal methods other than the pill. This contraceptive category plays almost no role at the start of someone’s sexually active life (between 0% and 1% for the first time); it only becomes more important with increasing sexual activity. For that reason only the 18–25-year-olds were asked, as they have been using contraception for a longer period of time.

Around one in ten – there are virtually no differences with regard to gender or background here – stated they or their partner have tried hormonal contraceptives other than the pill. That means this form of contraception is now more significant than diaphragms (1–3%), the IUD (2–8%) and the chemical contraceptives once commonly used in the past (3–9%).
Experiences with Hormonal Contraception

Nuvaring, patches, implant, IUS, injections

18–25-year-olds by background

In grey: comparative data IUD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuvaring</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patches</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implant</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injections</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In detail. The differences in experiences with the various contraceptives by gender are minor – the figures are maximally 3 percentage points apart.

Age plays more of a role, particularly for adolescents and young adults with a migrant background. The proportion of respondents who have experience with the pill as a contraceptive is 65% for 14–17-year-old boys with a migrant background, but 81% for the 18–25-year-old young men of non-German background: that corresponds to a difference of 16 percentage points. This difference is also present for the girls/young women but not to the same extent (plus 7 points) since more of them already (also) gather some experiences with the pill between 14 and 17. The increase in experience with the pill as a contraceptive increases by a similar level of magnitude (plus 8 points) for the young German men.

Interrupting sexual intercourse in time ('being careful', 'pulling out') is also often practised at least once – age and the extent of sexual activity are closely connected and with that the increase in knowledge: the differences when comparing the age groups are 8 to 14 percentage points (young German women: only 2%) depending on gender and background. That means around 30% of the young German adults and more than 40% of the non-German respondents in the 18–25-year-old age bracket have used this method at least once to avoid pregnancy.

Preventing pregnancy by exploiting the infertile days or measuring body temperature is particularly widespread among the 18–25-year-old women with a migrant background (20%; 14–17-year-olds with a non-German background: 9%), and more so among the highly educated girls and young women (22%). For the German girls/young women there is no significant connection between a preference for these methods and level of education.
14.2.5 General contraceptive behaviour

Conscientious contraception is evidently more a woman’s remit than a man’s. That at least was suggested by the responses to the question to what extent the respondents pay attention to preventing a pregnancy.

The girls/young women exhibit a high level of awareness for the need for contraception because seven in ten of them choose the highest category on the scale, saying they were ‘always very vigilant’ about preventing a pregnancy. In that same vein, there are only very few who, according to their own testimony, are rarely or never vigilant about contraception and even the mid-category ‘generally’ only attracts less than 10%.

It is a somewhat different picture for the boys/young men: around half of them say they are ‘always very vigilant’ about contraception. A fifth pick the next-lowest category ‘almost always’ and as many again class their behaviour one step lower, saying they were ‘generally’ vigilant about contraception. Even among the boys/young men, though, only a few exhibit exceptionally careless behaviour (contraception rarely or never), however somewhat more so than among the girls/young women (both categories together: 4% and 7% respectively).

When comparing the genders, the following finding is striking: while the boys/young men do not pick the top, highly meticulous, category less often, this does not mean that they compensate by choosing the second-highest category, ‘almost always’, correspondingly more often: this category is just as popular for both sexes. Instead, the boys/young men are more likely to class their contraceptive behaviour as something they are ‘generally’ vigilant about.
When interpreting these gender differences, we have to take into account the fact that over the years the pill has been used ever more frequently from a younger and younger age, because this form of contraception places the responsibility more with the girls.

**In detail.** Background plays almost no role when it comes to the respondents assessing their own contraceptive behaviour. The statements made by the girls/young women with and without a migrant background are almost identical. And the difference among the boys/young men is quite small, at 5 percentage points for the category ‘always very vigilant’ – however, the answers shift by this degree down to the lowest answer categories: overall 11% of non-German boys/young men say they are rarely or never vigilant about contraception (German boys/young men: 6%).

Comparing the responses given by the adolescents and young adults, it is surprising that the younger ones, and not the older, more experienced ones, are more meticulous about their contraception. That is even truer for the male respondents than for the female ones. Boys are 13 percentage points more likely than young men to describe their contraceptive behaviour as ‘always very vigilant’. If we focus solely on the German male respondents, this gap widens to 15 percentage points. When comparing the girls with the young women, the difference between the older and younger ones is 7 percentage points regardless of background.

It would appear that boys feel particularly co-responsible for contraception, especially in this initial phase, more so than during their later sexual lives. Some of the differences are likely to be associated with the different extent of sexual activities. The older they are, the more experience they have, and therefore there will have been situations retrospectively where the contraceptive issue took a back seat so that the young women switch from the category ‘always very vigilant’ to ‘almost always’. However, for the young men, the percentages shift more, both towards ‘almost always’ and towards ‘generally’. A possible factor here is that they no longer see themselves as responsible for contraception in relationships that have existed for a longer period of time, because the couple have switched to the pill and it is the young women who have to take it. However, that connexion cannot be confirmed from the data.
The first sexual experiences are evidently formative for a person’s further behaviour. Those who started out their sexually active lives with a partner they only knew casually or not at all tend to be worse than average when it comes to contraception. That is particularly true for the girls/young women, but there is also a tendency in this direction for the boys/young men.

**TABLE: General contraceptive behaviour; here: ‘always very vigilant’, by degree of familiarity with the partner during the first sexual intercourse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First sexual intercourse partner was</th>
<th>Girls/young women</th>
<th>Boys/young men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… Steady partner</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… Casual acquaintance/unknown</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

German girls/young women who had sexual intercourse at age 14 or younger are less likely to class their general contraceptive behaviour as one where they are ‘always very vigilant’ about avoiding a pregnancy. The proportion in this group who pick that category is 59%, while for those who became sexually active later, even if only by a year, at 15, it was at least 71%. There are no such correlations for the girls/young women with a migrant background, nor for the male adolescents/young adults.

If the respondents were specifically advised by their parents about contraception, it has a positive impact. If the parents were involved in this way, the respondents were more vigilant about their contraception. The adolescents and young adults who received such advice were 12 percentage...
points more likely to say they were ‘always very vigilant’ than if this was not the case. If the topic of sexuality was not taboo in the home but was openly communicated, then the general contraceptive behaviour was also better, by 10 percentage points on average.

The boys/young men with a non-German background do not fit the same pattern. For them there is no perceptible influence from the home whatever the general conversational climate about sexual matters.

**Long-term trend – German 23 14–17-year-olds**

We see the same picture across all the surveys: girls are consistently more conscientious about contraception than boys. The gap between the sexes has been bigger in the past than it is today. In any case, the contraceptive behaviour of both groups is currently better than it was at the time of the first survey in 1980.

**General Contraceptive Behaviour**

**Long-term trend, German 14–17-year-olds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>German girls</th>
<th>German boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question: Which of the following statements characterizes your behaviour with regard to preventing pregnancy best?
Base: 14–17-year-olds with German citizenship; from 2014: background, with multiple heterosexual intercourse experience

**Girls.** Generally speaking the girls’ contraceptive behaviour has remained remarkably constant over the decades. By the late 1990s the proportion who said they were always very vigilant about contraception was around three quarters. The reason this does not hold for the decade in general is because of the drop in 1996: during this survey the figure fell to 68% and thus corresponded to the starting figure of the 1980 survey.

23 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
**Boys.** The general progression is similar for the boys but is not marked with the same constancy. For them too, the percentage who are always very vigilant about contraception temporarily drops down to the level of the first survey; the tendency exists as for the girls in 1996, but to the full extent only in 1998. Since then the percentages have grown less rapidly survey by survey than for the girls, but they have done so consistently without downward fluctuations. The current value of 66% is the second-highest after 69% in 1994. It confirms the two-thirds level that the boys’ value has settled on again. The gap to the girls is 11 percentage points, the same as it was at the time of the previous survey five years ago.

14.2.6 Reasons for not using contraception generally

**Reasons for Not Using Contraception Generally**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It happened too spontaneously</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgot the Pill</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing’s going to happen</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of alcohol, drugs</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No contraception to hand</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to ‘be careful’</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When respondents are asked why they were not ‘always very vigilant’ about their contraception, it is generally four explanations that crop up time and again; respondents gives an average of two reasons.

‘Forgot to take the pill’ is the most commonly cited reason given by the girls/young women, and for the boys/young men (on behalf of their partner) it is also among the top four reasons given. This is where the disadvantage of the main contraceptive, the pill, comes to light: using the pill for birth control requires it to be taken regularly and consistently within a certain window and that requires discipline which is not always upheld.
At least one in three were so completely surprised by the developments that they had no time to think about contraception (‘it happened too spontaneously’). Even though this is still one of the main reasons – and for boys/young men still the most common one at 36% – it can be said on a positive note that the number of those who fall back on this justification is substantially lower, at 36%/34%, than for when the respondents were asked about why they did not use contraception for the first time (girls/young women: 57%, boys/young men: 67%).

In around a quarter of cases alcohol and drugs were involved. A naïve belief that ‘nothing’s going to happen’ despite a lack of precautions is equally widespread.

Generally speaking, the reasons the female and male respondents give are quite similar, but with one exception: the girls/young women are much more likely to cite the forgotten pill as a reason. They are the ones who experience this directly; the male partner will not be informed about this lapse in every case.

**In detail.** With increasing age, and therefore in line with the ever more widespread use of the pill, there is also an increased probability that there will be problems in its application at some point. This is reflected very clearly in the responses given by both sexes if they are distinguished by age group. Young women aged 18–25 are almost 50% more likely to give ‘forgetting the pill’ as a reason for their occasional lapse in contraception than girls aged 14–17 (43% v. 31%). When comparing boys and young men, the older ones say it almost twice as often as the younger ones (30% v. 17%).

One problem that seems to affect the male respondents more is that young men were more likely to not pay attention to contraception as a result of alcohol or drugs. 30% of the 18–25-year-olds fall back on this reason (compared to 21% among the 14–17-year-old boys). There are no differences among the girls/young women depending on age group (23%/24%).

There are hardly any differing reasons among the boys/young men depending on background – there are more for the girls/young women. The biggest difference is that since the girls/young women with a migrant background are less likely to use the contraceptive pill at all, this group are also less likely to refer to using it incorrectly. Quite generally girls/young women of non-German background seem to be less forward-planning: they are more likely to be surprised by the situation (40%; German background: 33%), they are more likely not to have contraception to hand (20%/14%) and they rely more on ‘being careful’ (23%/14%).

Some girls/young women from families with a migrant background – more so than German girls/young women – deliberately opted against contraception: 14% said they wanted a child (German girls/young women: 8%) and 5% are currently pregnant (German background: 2%). This predominantly relates to the young adults 18 and older. Children are not yet an issue for the 14–17-year-olds.
14.3 A close look at the main contraceptives: condoms and the pill
14.3.1 Problems using the pill or condoms

Since the pill and condoms are gender-specific in their application, the following figures depict the
actual users in bars – i.e. the girls for the pill and the boys for condoms. However, both sexes were
asked about their experiences with these methods (if they had the relevant experience of the pill and
condoms respectively). For that reason the percentages of the other sex are given in a coloured bar
on the right.

Condoms and the pill – both contraceptives, despite their many advantages that make them the
most popular contraceptives, also have their particular (application) pitfalls.

Problems Using Condoms
Focus boys/young men

Those who are familiar with problems using condoms tend to be familiar with more than one; on
average the respondents gave 1.6 of the predetermined eight categories. The spectrum of possible
difficulties is broad; only the allergy issue is suffered by just a very few (1%). By contrast, a third of
the boys/young men in each case have been confronted with two problems: the condom burst or
tore, or they had difficulties putting it on. A somewhat smaller number – in each case a quarter –
said they had problems with their sensation (‘lost erection’), or sizing issues (‘too small’). A some-
what smaller number experienced that the condom slipped off or felt too dry.

Not all boys/young men who have experience using condoms say they have had problems with them.
One in five make no such statement. This can largely be assumed to mean that they have in fact not
had any great problems using condoms to date.
The sexes are similar in this area – a fifth of the girls/young women also do not name any difficulties. And even with regard to the most-cited problems – a burst condom or difficulty putting it on – the answer pattern is almost identical. Other than that the answers are distributed somewhat differently. Girls/young women do not mention a loss of erection as often as the boys/young men (18%/26%). Instead they focus more on the ‘felt pain’ aspect (16% v. 9% among the boys/young men). It cannot be ruled out that these responses relate more to their own experiences with condom use than those of the boys – the two sexes’ answers are therefore not entirely comparable in this area. Overall the differences are limited. That is not surprising since condoms are an openly practised method where the application errors are visible to both parties, unlike for the pill.

### Problems Using the Pill
Focus girls/young women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Girls/women (%)</th>
<th>Boys/Men (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forgot to take it</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgot to take it with me</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty about efficacy (e.g., vomiting)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim bleeding</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwanted weight gain</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headaches</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced sexual desire</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allergy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No data</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The direct users of the pill can think of more negative side-effects for the pill than for condoms. We can deduce this from two clues: only one in ten girls/young women do not make a statement about usage problems (boys/young men about condoms: 19%), and they give an average of 2.3 reasons (boys/young men about condoms: 1.6).

The pill as a contraceptive is marked by one main problem, one which has already been discussed with regard to why the respondents did not always exhibit vigilant contraceptive behaviour: it has to be taken regularly and the longer it is used, the greater the probability that there will be an interruption. Two thirds of the girls/young women report that they have forgotten to take it at least once, and more than a third have forgotten to take the pill with them when they have spent the night away from home and were unable to take the pill for that reason. Both of these reasons are given significantly more often by the 18–25-year-olds than by the 14–17-year-olds.
Two further problems are cited by around a third of the girls/young women in each case. Diarrhoea and vomiting often reduce the efficacy of this method of contraception, and at 30% interim bleeding is the gravest of all the side-effects. However, other symptoms of taking hormones are also well-known: weight gain (24%), headaches (16%) and reduced sexual desire (15%).

**In detail.** Both with regard to condom use and the use of the pill, the young adults (18–25) are more likely to report problems using these contraceptives than the – overall less experienced – sexually active adolescents (14–17). This is true for both how often the individual aspects are cited, and for the fact that the younger ones are twice as likely as the older ones to pick none of the answers, meaning that they had problems less often. Quantitatively, the latter fact means a third of the 14–17-year-old boys who have used condoms listed no problems, while the same is only true for 17% of the 18–25-year-old young men. With regard to the pill, 16% of the girls reported no problems, while only 9% of the young women could say the same.

Background has no impact on the response behaviour of the girls/young women with regard to problems using the pill. German girls/young women have forgotten to take the pill more often (plus 8 percentage points); however, that is most likely the result of their greater experience rather than of behavioural differences.

Boys/young men of non-German background differ from their German counterparts in that they cite all of the listed problems with condom use somewhat more often (exception: pain). However, the order of frequency in which the problems are listed does not change substantially.

There are bigger differences when comparing the sexes. It would appear that boys/young men do not always know that the girl/young woman forgot to take the pill or that it might not be efficacious because of stomach or intestinal problems – only half as many boys/young men cite this problem compared to girls/young women. There is a certain risk inherent in the differing perception of the problems: if the (complete or partial) lack of contraceptive efficacy of the pill (which is ordinarily used) is not communicated, it could be the case that sexual intercourse takes place without contraception.

The male sexual partners are much less familiar with some of the side effects than the users of the pill. This is particularly true for interim bleeding and weight gain thanks to the pill, two factors cited comparatively often by the girls/young women.
14.3.2 Evaluation of the pill and condoms

All the adolescents and young adults were asked about their opinion of the two methods, but since the pill and condoms are gender-specific contraceptives, the user perspective is particularly interesting. For that reason in this chapter we describe the evaluation of the pill by the girls and the evaluation of condoms by the boys.

On average, the pill fares slightly better than condoms. Both contraceptive methods are seen very positively, however. The majority of the feedback about the aspects enquired about was located high up on the six-point scale from 1 (very good) to 6 (very poor) (values between 1.3 and 2.7).

The evaluation of the pill achieves an average grade above 2 on the six-point scale in four aspects – reliability, availability, impact on sex and manageability. The factors achieve average grades of between 1.6 (best mark) and 1.9, meaning they lie close together and none of the factors particularly stand out. The two remaining qualities are marked a whole grade lower. Cost is the biggest complaint about the pill – in this regard it does relatively poorly and only receives the average grade of 3.0 or 3.1. The factor ‘impact on health’ also does much less well than the first four aspects, but still achieves a rating better than 3.0 at 2.6 and 2.7.

Girls/young women with and without a migrant background largely agree in their evaluation. They deviate from each other by no more than 0.1 points, with one exception: availability. Girls/young women of non-German background give the aspect ‘good availability’ a 1.9; while the German girls/young women feel more positively (difference of 0.2 points).
By the way, girls/young women have a clear opinion about the pill throughout and are confident in evaluating all of the aspects, regardless of whether they use the pill themselves or not. The only aspect for which a significant number abstain from giving an assessment is how it impacts sexual intercourse.

For the vast majority of respondents the evaluations are based on personal experiences. Around one in two users of the pill assess the availability, reliability, manageability and impact on sexual intercourse as ‘very good’. Those who do not have experience of the pill are more likely to withhold an opinion. This group are also more critical than the pill users themselves; the grade ‘very good’ is only given half as often for most of the aspects of the pill and with regard to the impact on health, almost half of the answers (45%) fall into the negative half of the scale – 4 to 6 (counter-group ‘have had experience of the pill’: 19%).

**Evaluation of Condoms – Different Criteria**

**Boys/men by background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>German background</th>
<th>Migrant background</th>
<th>“Don’t know”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easily available</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to manage</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No negative impact on health</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect on sex</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 110**

The evaluation of condoms by the boys/young men exhibits a larger range. In some aspects condoms do both better and worse than the pill. The great boon of condoms comes from how easily available they are; for this, condoms reach a peak value of 1.3 and perform better than the pill. The impact on health is viewed positively (average value above 2); here condoms do much better than the pill. The average values in this area mean that 80%+ of the respondents opted for one of the top two categories on the scale. The low cost (average values of 2.3 or 2.4) also speak more for condoms than for the pill.

At the same time condoms have one big disadvantage. Sexual intercourse is not as spontaneous for condom users than it is with other contraception; the condom is always clearly present and many users feel that is a serious negative aspect. In this regard condoms are given the not so good average grade of 3.5. This is where condoms exhibit the biggest difference to the pill. The average does not,
however, mean that all boys/young men assess condoms negatively. Around half chose the grade 3 or 4, while the remaining respondents could be broken down into two camps of around the same size: a quarter are also very happy with condoms in this regard (grades 1 or 2) and as many are not at all happy (grades 5 or 6).

With regards to manageability and – even more so – to reliability, condoms get good grades at 2.2 and 2.3, but they do not come close to the good evaluation of the pill in these areas.

The background of the boys/young men has no impact on the evaluation.

In detail. Four of the six qualities of the pill are given the same evaluation by the girls/young women regardless of their age. However, there are clear differences in two areas. The girls/young women become more and more critical of the health implications of the pill with increasing age. While 59% of the 14–17-year-olds choose one of the top two values, the same is true for only 47%, and therefore less than half, of the 18–25-year-old women. Really strong differences exist with regard to their evaluation of the cost of the pill: given a 1 or a 2 by 58% of the 14–17-year-olds, the corresponding figure drops to just 28% for the 18–25-year-olds. The average grade for the adolescents is 2.2, for the young adults 3.2, i.e. a full grade lower.

### Evaluation of the Pill as Inexpensive

Girls/young women by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation as ‘inexpensive’</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top 2 values on the rating scale from 1 ‘very good’ to 6 ‘very poor’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Small Base: n = 26*

The fact responsible for this – and that is made very clear when looking at the individual age groups – is that on turning 20, the statutory health insurance no longer pays for the contraceptive pill.

The (negative) effects of condom use on sexual sensation are criticized more strongly by the older respondents than the younger ones. Among the 14–17-year-olds more than twice as many pick one of the top two values than do one of the bottom two (35% v. 14%), among the 18–25-year-olds ratio is approximately even (24%/27%).
Trend comparison to 1996 – German 24 14–17-year-olds

The 1996 survey was the first time the adolescents were asked to assess the qualities of the pill and of condoms. As a result, we only have trend data for the sample of German adolescents. Two things stand out in the trend comparison: young people today are much more likely to give an assessment than almost two decades ago, and they evaluate the pill in particular but also the condom in individual aspects as better than in 1996.

Evaluation of the Pill – Different Criteria
Trend comparison, German girls

The assessment of the pill has improved particularly with regard to its impact on health over the past 18 years – and indeed, the ingredients and composition of the pill have undergone changes during this period.

Girls today are, however, are more likely to be of the opinion that the pill is easily available than in 1996. Other than that, the differences in the trend comparison, with regard to concrete aspects, are minor.

However, the number of respondents who did not put forward an evaluation has decreased to different extents for the different criteria. In 1996 around a fifth of the girls and more did not know how to assess how the pill impacted on the experience of sex, how it impacted on their health and what costs were associated with it. These figures have now at least halved. Of these three aspects, the aspect ‘impact on the experience of sex’ is still the one that produces the most uncertainty in the respondents’ evaluation (16% ‘don’t know’). Generally speaking the percentages responding with

24 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
‘don’t know’ are now below 10%. The qualities that received evaluations from the vast majority of respondents in 1996 are manageability and reliability; little has changed here.

If more girls now feel confident in giving an evaluation, then this is also to do with the fact that the use of the pill during the years when they first become sexually active has gone up, which means they have concrete experiences of their own. However, the increased sex-education measures and the easier availability of information (blanket access to sex education in school, internet) will have had an impact.

For the boys’ evaluation of condoms it can be said: the evaluation of almost all the individual aspects has remained remarkably constant over the years. Only in one area has the average figure changed by more than 0.1 percentage points: the manageability of condoms is now given an average grade of 2.2 and is therefore assessed more positively than 18 years ago (2.6).

Unlike the girls, the sexually experienced boys were more confident about giving an evaluation in 1996. The maximum percentage of ‘don’t know’ responses was in the low single figures for four of the six aspects even then (between 2% and 7%). Merely with regard to impact on health (15%) and impact on sex (35%) a similar number of boys could not provide an evaluation of condoms as the equivalent group of girls (for the pill). Today there is no difference between the two qualities in this regard.
14.4 Emergency solution – experiences with the ‘morning after pill’
14.4.1 Using the ‘morning after pill’

Among the sexually active girls and young women only a small percentage have had experience of the ‘morning after pill’. However, its use is widespread enough that we cannot speak merely of isolated incidents. The ‘morning after pill’ is not seen as a substitute for other methods: the necessity of its use usually comes from ‘accidents’ or lack of care when using the regularly chosen contraceptive. Four in ten of the users think about the side effects of taking the ‘morning after pill’, demonstrating that the attitude to emergency contraception is not frivolous.

The ‘Morning After Pill’ – Use and Reasons

Girls/young women

Around one in four young women who have had sexual intercourse more than once have been in a situation during their sexually active lives where they have had to engage in emergency contraception by way of the ‘morning after pill’ (24%); a small percentage have had to take it several times (7% in total).

In detail. The older the girls/young women are, and therefore, the longer they have been sexually active, the more likely they are to have used the ‘morning after pill’. Comparing the 14–17-year-olds with the 18–25-year-olds, the percentages double, both for single use and multiple use.
TABLE: Use of the ‘morning after pill’ by age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used the ‘morning after pill’ ...</th>
<th>14–17-year-old girls</th>
<th>18–25-year-old young women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

Among the girls/young women with a higher level of education its use is more widespread (28%; lower level of education: 19%); however, they are also the ones who are more likely to know about this option.

Sexually active girls/young women with a migrant background are somewhat more likely to have used the ‘morning after pill’: a total of 28% compared to girls/young women of German background. The differences based on education are greater here than among the young German women. The more highly educated women in this group are more likely to have considerable experience with the ‘morning after pill’.

The group of girls/young women who had a poor start to their sexually active lives (first sexual intercourse with a partner they only knew casually or not at all) have much more experience with the ‘morning after pill’: the number of girls/young women who have already been in the emergency situation several times and who wanted to prevent a pregnancy after the fact is shockingly high in this group: at 19% the figure is almost three times the average (7%). A further 22% have used the ‘morning after pill’ once; together that makes a percentage of 41%.

Nevertheless it would be wrong to conclude from this that emergency contraception only occurs among problem groups. Even among those respondents whose first experience of intercourse time with a familiar partner or where contraception was discussed in depth in the home many have been in this emergency situation once or several times and have had to take advantage of the ‘morning after pill’ (both groups: used once: 15%; used several times: 6%).

Trend comparison 2001 to 2014 – 14–17-year old German girls

When comparing the four surveys that contain data about the percentage of girls who have experience with using the ‘morning after pill’, the figures prove to be relatively stable over the years.

TABLE: Use of the ‘morning after pill’, trend for 14–17-year old German girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used the ‘morning after pill’ ...</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

25 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
Although the figures were somewhat higher in 2009 than in 2001 and 2005, however, a continuing increase could only be deduced as a minimal tendency from the current data.

14.4.2 The situation in which the ‘morning after pill’ was used

If the ‘morning after pill’ was used, then generally it was because there was a problem with the actual contraceptive. In around half of the cases the condom slipped off during sexual intercourse or it tore (44%). An even greater number of responses relate to the two response categories that relate to the pill: more than one in three have forgotten to take the regular pill and around half as many worried about impairments to its efficacy because of diarrhoea and vomiting.

29% of the girls/young women also said they used the ‘morning after pill’ because they had had sexual intercourse without protection. This figure suggests a somewhat greater carelessness than is actually the case. Since multiple responses were permitted for this question, some used the category ‘had sex without contraception’ to describe the consequence of the problems with their regular contraception.

The percentage cannot be determined precisely because some girls/young women have already used the ‘morning after pill’ several times and the question about why emergency contraception was used does not relate to individual situations; instead it is a summary. However, we can get an idea of the dimension from the responses by the girls/young women who only used the ‘morning after pill’ once, since multiple categories here relate to the one situation. In this group 13% had a contraceptive failure with condoms or the pill and this triggered them to say they ‘had sex without contraception’.

In detail. The greater affinity girls/young women with a migrant background have for condoms is also expressed among the reasons why they used emergency contraception: they are more likely to say the condom slipped or tore and they are less likely to refer to problems with the pill. The more highly educated German girls/young women are also more likely than average to report problems with condoms – however, without them citing fewer problems with the pill. Forgetfulness (with regard to taking the pill) is a phenomenon that is independent of level of education, and the potentially impaired efficacy of the regular pill as a result of vomiting and diarrhoea is in fact cited more often by them than by users with a basic or middling level of education. Instead, the percentage of respondents saying they ‘had sex without contraception’ decreases with increasing levels of education.

A new question that was introduced to the survey in 2014 illuminates the situation in which the need to take the ‘morning after pill’ arose from a perspective other than the contraceptive one. It focuses more on how the situation was dealt with and the difficulties that potentially arose in using emergency contraception.

It was revealed that the situation which led to the ‘morning after pill’ being taken was characterized by countless questions and problems. Three of the eight answer categories were chosen particularly often – by 40% to 50%: many of the girls/young women who have taken the ‘morning after pill’ were scared they might still get pregnant (49%), taking it proved to be complicated because the prescription had to take place at the weekend (46%) and the users had concerns about the side effects (39%).
If the responses ‘it was hard to find a doctor’ and ‘doctor didn’t want to prescribe’ are combined, a good fifth of the users mention problems associated with it being a prescription medication and therefore requiring a doctor. The difficulty of even finding a doctor is the much bigger one, which will in part be connected to the reported weekend problems.

Almost all of the affected girls/young women knew that the option of emergency contraception existed, but far from all of them (17%) were aware of the general procedure required to obtain emergency contraception.

Uncertainties about how the ‘morning after pill’ is to be used are rare at 7%.

**The ‘Morning After Pill’ – Situation Surrounding Its Use**

Girls/young women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t initially know about this option</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t know what to do to get it</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was difficult to find a doctor</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor didn’t want to prescribe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was uncertain how to use it</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had worries about the side effects</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was scared I would get pregnant anyway</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was difficult because it was the weekend</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple answers possible; in%

**In detail.** Some of the statements made by the younger users correspond to the problems mentioned by the older respondents, but in some ways they are different, too.

14–17-year-olds who were faced with the situation of having to take emergency contraception are generally more uncertain: they were much less likely than the young women (18–25) to know that the option of emergency contraception existed or what they had to do to get the ‘morning after pill’.

The 14–17-year-olds were also somewhat more uncertain about how to use emergency contraception (11%, 18–25: 7%).
TABLE: ‘Morning after pill’: situation of its use by age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the situation...</th>
<th>14–17-year-old girls</th>
<th>18–25-year-old young women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t initially know about this option</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn’t know what to do to get the ‘morning after pill’</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in %

In return, it is more the older respondents than the younger ones who think more about the potential side effects of taking emergency contraception (40% compared to 29%). The weekend problem is also more pronounced among the 18–25-year-olds (47% compared to 31%).

Both problem areas are also cited more frequently, the higher the respondents’ level of education. At the same time – and this is surely associated with the weekend problem – girls/young women with higher levels of education are more likely to report problems finding a doctor (21%; basic/middle level of education: 7%/10%). That is not because of lack of knowledge in this group because generally speaking the girls/young women with an 18+ school-leaving certificate or university degree are well informed about the option of the ‘morning after pill’.
15 Sexual violence

For girls/young women between the ages of 14 and 25, experience of sexual violence is not an isolated incident. A shockingly high number – one in five young women, and among the sexually active no fewer than one in four – have already had to confront this issue in their lifetime, some of them indeed several times. A small percentage of the male respondents were also affected. Compared to the number of young women affected, the problem here seems to be much smaller – only 4% of the boys/young men said they had been forced into sexual acts or intimacies against their will. This is true for the entirety of the boys/young men, but the boys/young men with a homosexual or bisexual orientation are almost as affected by this problem as the young women are – here too one in five reported incidents (21%). Quite generally, the young people who are not (clearly) heterosexual have an above-average risk in this area, because the girls/young women with homosexual and bisexual orientations also report sexual violence more often (32%) than the average for girls/young women (20%).

While it plays almost no role for the boys/young men, the risk of sexual assault evidently increases for girls/young women if they are already sexually active. This statement cannot be deduced directly from the data, since the sexual activities reflect the situation at the time of the survey, whereas the unwanted actions could have occurred further back in the past, i.e. even before someone had sexual intercourse for the first time. However, the figures say at least this much: among the sexually experienced survey participants, at least twice as many say they have already been forced into sexual activities compared to the girls/young women who have not yet become sexually active. Girls/young
women from migrant families are affected somewhat more than German girls/young women. However, girls without sexual intercourse experience are not unaffected: even in this group at least one in ten girls/young women say they have been pressured at least once in order to provide sex or intimacies.

The older the girls/young women, the more common negative experiences of this kind are (which generally correlates with a corresponding number of sexual contacts).

The percentages of victims, when split into the age groups 14–17 and 18–25, correspond roughly to the percentages we get when the respondents are split into ‘sexually inexperienced’ and ‘sexually experienced’.

For the girls with German citizenship (2014: German background), the first time this question was asked was in 1998. This and the subsequent surveys reveal a slight decline (1998: 16%, 2001: 15%, 2005: 13%, 2009: 13%, 2014: 11%).

**In detail.** For the girls/young women we can see further correlations if we differentiate in even greater detail: the small group of girls/young women who only knew their first sexual partner casually or not at all, are particularly likely to report sexual pressure – 42% among the German girls/young women, and even 53% of the girls/young women from migrant families. In this group multiple violations are particularly common.

Those who were 14 or younger when they had sexual intercourse for the first time also exhibit increased levels of experience with sexual violence, but not to the same extent (32%/40%). However, given their early start into a sexually active life, they have had more sexual encounters – and that goes with a generally increased risk of being exposed to unwanted sexual pressure.

A negative body image is associated with an above-average likelihood of negative experiences, because even among those girls who report not being happy with their bodies, one in three also report sexual violence; however, the data do not allow us to deduce a causal link.

One factor for which there is no correlation in this matter is level of education. Girls/young women with a higher level of education are just as affected by sexual violence as girls/young women with a basic level of education.
The experience of sexual violence: perpetrators

**Girls/young women**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Ex) boyfriend in a steady relationship</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend/schoolmate/colleague</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New acquaintance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A man I was dependent on</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown boy/ man</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple responses possible, in %

Among the girls and young women affected, the responses focus on two groups of perpetrators: a new acquaintance or an (ex-)boyfriend (both 7%). Other friends, classmates, and alike also play a somewhat larger role (4%), as do complete strangers (3%). Other situations are rarer but do sometimes occur (someone from the family – 1%; a neighbour – 1%; someone the respondent was dependent on – 0%).

The answers are the same regardless of whether a migrant background was present or not.

**In detail.** Girls/young women who live rurally with no proximity to a town – a small number in total – have experienced unwanted sexual attention comparatively less often, but if such assaults took place, then the most common response is that it was someone in the family (6%, otherwise at most 3%).

Among the group of boys/young men who do not have a homosexual or bisexual orientation – those with a homosexual or bisexual orientation are particularly vulnerable to sexual pressure – the greatest danger emanates most clearly from new acquaintances (13%; other perpetrators maximally 4%).
In around half of the cases the girls/young women who experienced sexual pressure managed to fend it off by defending themselves against the assaults, meaning no sexual act occurred (50%).

Of those who were not successful in fending off the assault, one third engaged in kissing or petting as a result of the sexual pressure (32%), while sexual intercourse was the result in a quarter (26%) of cases. ‘Other’ sexual acts are rarer (10%). (This category was primarily meant to refer to oral sex and anal sex, however, these terms were deliberately not explicitly used on the questionnaire; instead the expression ‘other sexual acts’ was used, which gave the respondents interpretational leeway.)

**In detail.** The very small group of homosexual and bisexual boys/young men who were exposed to sexual pressure (n=21) were hardly able to fend off the unwanted advances. In the majority of cases kissing or petting occurred against their will. And around a fifth also reported that sexual intercourse and/or other sexual acts had occurred.

Girls/young women who were only casually acquainted with their first sexual partner or who did not know him at all have an above average likelihood of having been a victim of sexual violence, and compared to the group who experienced sexual intercourse for the first time with a steady boyfriend, they were also less able to withstand the pressure. 39% said that the situation ended with unwanted sexual intercourse, and ‘other’ sexual acts were also substantially more common. The instance in which the girls/young women experienced sexual pressure and its consequences need not have been the first sexual intercourse experience for all of them; however, there are some indicators to suggest that at least for some in this group, their first experience of sexual intercourse was not voluntary.
Trend comparison 2001 to 2014: 14–17-year old German girls

As regards the effects of the sexual repressions and the manner in which the victims deal with them, the last two surveys reveal a negative trend, because the unwanted activities are now more likely to lead all the way to sexual intercourse than in earlier years. Among the girls who have had sexual intercourse and who have been victims of sexual violence, 26% currently report, in 2014, that sexual intercourse resulted (2009: 24%, 2005 and 2001: 14%).

The 2009 figure, which suggested that fewer and fewer respondents were able to fend off the sexual pressure, is not confirmed by the 2014 data. Today 58% of the 14–17-year-olds report that they were able to avoid sexual acts by defending themselves; in 2009 that figure was only 49% (2005: 62%, 2001: 65%).

Communicating About Sexual Violence Experienced
Girls/young women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: Did you tell anyone about this experience?</th>
<th>Base: 14–25-year-old girls/young women who experienced sexual pressure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, right afterwards</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only a few days later</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but only a few weeks/months later</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes but only years later</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, nobody</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being forced into sexual activities against their will – this is an experience many cannot (at first) talk about. Only around a third of the girls/young women affected confided in someone right after it happened. A further third spoke to someone a few days (17%) or at least a few weeks or months (14%) after the event.

However, one in seven (14%) said they had waited years to talk about the experience. And a fairly sizeable percentage of girls/young women, namely one in four, said they had not spoken to anyone about it.

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26 1980 to 2009: German citizenship; from 2014: German background
How quickly (and if at all) a victim confided in someone depends greatly on how the situation ended. Those who were able to fend off the sexual advances found it easiest to talk about it. In this group around half spoke to someone about it right after the event and only 17% said nothing. However, only 13% of girls/young women who were forced into sexual intercourse against their will confided in someone right afterwards. One in four took years to do so and more than a third have not spoken to anyone about it (35%).

Among the boys/young men affected by sexual violence, the behaviour is similar. However, the boys/young men who were able to fight back successfully seem to find it somewhat easier to speak to someone about it right after the event, while those who were forced into sexual acts are even more restrained than the girls/young women, and keep the experience to themselves. Since there were only a few victims in each of these categories, the behaviours exhibited by the boys/young men can only be called tendencies, not statistically robust.

**In detail.** Girls/young women who had intercourse for the first time at a very early age are less likely to say they have not spoken to anyone about the sexual assault or pressure they experienced (14%; average: 24%). However, they were more likely to wait years before confiding in someone.

Girls/young women with low levels of education seem to find it harder than others to communicate about what they have experienced; they are overall less likely to talk about the events shortly after it happened, and also more likely not to talk about it at all.

Girls/young women from homes where sex is openly discussed are also more likely to speak out about their negative experiences and to speak out sooner. If there is no general openness, 32% (12 percentage points more than the average) say they have told nobody about it.

Girls/young women from migrant families are no different to the German girls/young women in their communication; only the few girls/young women of Turkish background exhibit an above-average tendency to confide in no one.
Communication About Sexual Violence Experienced
Girls/young women

If the girls/young women affected confided in anyone, then they were most likely to talk to someone they considered a friend. Three in four chose the answer ‘a friend’. A smaller percentage (30%) (also) talked to their father or mother about the events experienced; often they talk to their parents and a friend. 15% spoke to their then partner – or more commonly – their current partner. ‘Other adults’ – cited by 7% – are confided in most often when parents are unavailable as confidants. Specific experts were not among the categories given; however, some of the victims (2%) said they had confided in a doctor, psychologist or someone else with expert knowledge.

In detail. The communication behaviour of the girls/young women with and without a migrant background is largely the same – both groups primarily talk to friends about their experiences. However, there are some differences when comparing the two groups of 14–17-year-olds: the German 14–17-year-olds are more likely to also confide in their parents along with in their friends. For the young adults (18–25) the parents are not as relevant anymore as confidants, regardless of background. Instead, the partner becomes more relevant.

What is crucial for the girls/young women of German and non-German background is whether there is an open atmosphere about sexual matters in the home. If that is the case, the mother or father is more likely to be informed (35%/36%). If this is not the case, these figures decrease to less than half. A lack of openness in the home is sometimes compensated for by the fact that these girls/young women increasingly turn to peers (in each case 10 percentage points more compared to the counter-group). Some in the group where there is little (less) openness in the home are more likely to have to process the events alone, without being able to confide in anyone (see above in this chapter).

Girls/young women from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds are less communicative overall; they are less likely to talk to several people and friends are less important than average.
Because of the small case numbers, we cannot make any definite statements about the boys/young men affected by sexual assault. It would appear that the 18–25-year-old young men are less likely to confide in their parents than the 18–25-year-old young women. Boys/young men of non-German background are more likely to also talk to other adults about it and the partner seems to play a somewhat bigger role.
16 The desire for children and pregnancy
16.1 Is there a desire to have children?

The vast majority of young people today want to have children at some point in their lives. Including those who already have a child or are currently in the process of becoming parents – 4% of the 14–25-year-olds – three in four adolescents/young adults say children are part of life. Only a small minority of 10% speak out against children. The percentage of respondents who say children do not form part of their life plans proves to be very stable from a young age. The proportions are similar, even when looking at subgroups such as background.

A Desire for Children, General

There are differences between the women and men in the ‘don’t know’ category: boys/young men struggle a bit more to commit than girls/young women, because at 18% the uncertain category is half as large again as for the girls/young women at 12%.

Age has much more of an impact than gender. Here it can be seen that girls already form an attitude towards children at a young age: at 14 and 15 around one fifth are still undecided but by age 16 the number who are undecided drops to 13% and drops further to 9% with increasing age. Almost all who make a decision make it in favour of a life with children. However: if we go into even more detail and look at the individual years, the percentage of respondents who do not want children is highest among the oldest age groups (24-year-olds: 13%, 25-year-olds: 13%).
A Desire for Children, General

By age

It takes the male adolescents longer to find their position. At age 14 around one in three still cannot answer this question. The percentage of boys who are undecided drops over the years, but much less quickly than for the girls/young women. It is only among the young men aged 20+ that a similar level is reached. The number of boys/young men opting against children decreases more with increasing age, at least when the ages are taken together. The result is not so clear when looking at individual years. The highest percentage measured for those who prefer childlessness is 15% among the 24-year-olds.

In detail. Background plays almost no role in the general attitude towards children. Adolescents/young adults with and without a migrant background have very similar views of life with regard to children.

The educational background has more of an impact. The 14–25-year-olds with a low level of qualifications (non-academic secondary school) are different in two ways from those who are more educated. The adolescents and young adults with a basic level of education are most likely to speak out against children (13% in this group; among the respondents with an 18+ school-leaving certificate or university degree, only 8%). Furthermore, if the respondents with a basic level of education say they want children, they set about fulfilling this desire at a younger age: 14% of them say they are currently pregnant or have a child already. The percentage is somewhat higher for the girls/young women (18%) than for the boys/young men (10%), which is largely because of the answers of the – on average somewhat older – German girls/young women (21%; non-German background: 13%). A decision in favour of a child is almost exclusively a vision of the future among the more highly educated – only 2% are parents already or currently expecting.
The desire for children is a theoretical statement for the 14–17-year-olds, but also for the 18–20-year-olds, the fulfilment of which is to take place later in life. It is merely among the 21–25-year-olds that there is a sizeable percentage of young women and men who have had a child or are just about to have one; the average here is 9%.

The west-east comparison confirms what many other sources state: early motherhood is more common for young women in east Germany even today, 25 years after reunification. 19% compared to 4% of women from west Germany say they have already had a child or they are currently pregnant.

If we only look at those who face the general question of whether to have children or not (i.e. those who have not yet had children nor are currently pregnant), then there are hardly any differences in their attitudes towards children. However, if we look only at the 14–17-year-olds, we can see that the 14–17-year-olds in east Germany decide earlier than their west German peers, because the ‘don’t know’ category is larger in the latter group. There is a clear desire for children in both east and west Germany. The greater aversion towards children that existed among west German adolescents in previous surveys – manifested in the answer ‘I don’t want children’ – do not exist so clearly anymore.

The family circumstances seem to have some influence too. The greatest level in favour of children exists among young women who grew up with both of their biological parents (77%, for other family constellations maximally 68%).

16.2 Number of children desired

The 14–17-year-olds were not asked about the number of children they desired since many of them were already overwhelmed with the basic question of whether they wanted children at all. The question about how many children they might want would have been even further removed from the reality of their lives.

We can also see that the young adults aged 18–25 who were confronted with the question of how many children they wanted did not have clear ideas about this yet: around one in five did not (yet) want to settle on a number.

Among those who give a number of children, the preference is clear. More than half of the 18–25-year-olds agree that two children would be ideal. If they deviate from this ideal, then they are more likely to want more children rather than fewer: 7% say they want one child, but more than twice as many say three children is the desirable number (16%); a further 3% go beyond that, saying they would like four or more children.

Just as was the case with the more fundamental question about whether the respondents want children at all, the young women already have more precise ideas about the number of children they want than the young men. Gender is not the only influencing factor; so too is background. For around three in ten young adults with a migrant background, more than two children is acceptable, and on that, both sexes are agreed. Answer discrepancies by gender exist in this group because the young men between 18 and 25 are still more undecided. Young German adults differ in that the young women are more able to imagine more than two children (22%), while young men – just like those of non-German background – do not yet have such clear ideas about the future number of children.
**Number of Children Desired**

By background

![Bar chart showing the desired number of children by background and gender.](image)

**TNS Emnid**

Question: How many children would you like to have (if children are already present: in total)?

Base: 18–25-year-olds if desire for children is present, or children already present, or pregnant

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**In detail.** Those with a higher level of education are more likely to say they want more than two children.

Of the young Turkish women around a third would like three children or more – placing them 6 percentage points above the average for women with a migrant history.

We can see differences between east and west Germany with regard to the question of children: the ideal of a family with more than one child is more widespread among young German women in the west, and more weakly among the men (24%/14%), than among their peers in east Germany (18%/11%). Even though the majority ideal in both east and west is two children, the one-child model has more supporters in east Germany. 15% of the 18–25-year-old women say as much (comparison in west Germany: 6%). Among the young men the differences are not as clear, but they are still visible.

16.3 **Ideal time to have the first child**

The young adults are largely agreed about the ideal time to start a family. More than two thirds of the young women and men say that they want to finish their education and gather several years of experience in the workplace before having the first child. Having a child before or during their job training (or degree) is desired by almost no one, which leaves a group of around one fifth who would like to finish their training/education but who then would like their first child ‘as soon as possible’.

Only 8% – that is less than half as many as in the question about the ideal number of children – express uncertainty about the ideal time.
**Ideal Time to Have First Child**

![Bar Chart]

When asked about the timing, there are no differences with regard to background. There are, however, differences with regard to level of education. Those who have an 18+ school-leaving certificate or who have possibly already graduated from university are more decisive. The young women with a basic level of education exhibit the greatest level of uncertainties (‘don’t know’: 18%; among the young women of non-German background the figure is even higher at 22%), while the proportion who cannot or will not give a fixed time is at most 5% among the young women with a higher level of education. However, with increasing levels of education, there is also an increase in the percentage of respondents who consider an earlier time as ideal: the answer ‘as soon as possible after job training’ was picked by around a quarter of the more highly educated respondents, but only by around 10% of the young people with basic qualifications.

There appears to be some final residue of the traditional GDR attitudes with regard to this question too: under the communist regime, it was quite normal to have children young, even among university students. Today it is only a small minority, but 4% of the young women and men from east Germany could imagine starting a family while at university or in job training, while this is almost completely out of the question for the young adults in west Germany (comparison figures for the west: both 1%). We should also bear in mind that a far greater number of young women from east Germany than west Germany have already taken the step towards having a family (see ch. 16.1).
16.4  Attitude towards pregnancy

Potential pregnancy

Getting pregnant now? Around half of the 14–25-year-old girls/young women who are not currently pregnant and who have not yet had children are united in the assessment that a pregnancy now would be a ‘disaster’ for them. Another third would consider such a situation as ‘very unpleasant’. Boys/young men are a bit more relaxed in this regard. They veer more towards ‘very unpleasant’ than towards ‘disaster’. If the two categories are taken together, then both sexes reach the same conclusion: for at least four in five of them a pregnancy now would be anything but a pleasing event.

Age of course is crucial when considering pregnancy – and for the 14–17-year-olds the situation is quite different from what it is for young people in their mid-twenties.

For three quarters of the 14-year-old girls a pregnancy now would be a disaster (that is even more true for girls from non-German homes). At 18/19 it is still more than half (55%/54%) of the young women who feel it would be a disaster. The figure only drops below the 50% mark from age 20 onwards. With increasing age it continues to drop in small steps until it reaches its lowest level among the 24-year-olds at 27%.

The percentages of boys/young men who choose ‘it would be a disaster’ exhibit the same decreasing trend with increasing age, but at a lower level. At 23, 24 years of age, the assessment of both sexes reaches its maximum convergence.
Even though a pregnancy would no longer be a disaster for the majority of the respondents in their early to mid-twenties, such an event would still not be exactly welcome. Even among the 25-year-old women, merely 12% say such an event would be ‘pleasing’, while 26% say a pregnancy at this time would ‘not be bad’ (young men of the same age: 17%/23%).

**In detail.** If the respondents have a steady partner, then a potential pregnancy does not appear quite so terrible – however, here too age is an influencing factor because the number of steady relationships goes up with increasing age.

**Actual pregnancies – parents and parent-to-be in the sample**

A small percentage of the adolescents and young adults in the sample say they are already a mother/father (4%/3%) or are currently pregnant/have a pregnant partner (2%/1%).

This is true for only a few isolated cases among the 14–17-year-olds – less than 0.5% (pregnant/parent already) among the girls and 1%/<0.5% among the boys. Four in five of the young women who are already mothers or are about to be mothers are currently older than 20. Even though we cannot tell from the data when the pregnancies the respondents reported occurred, a pregnancy before the age of 18 was presumably the exception if we look at how few of the current 14–17-year-olds are pregnant. And the same is true for the male respondents: more than 80% of the boys/young men who currently have a pregnant partner or who already have a child are aged 21–25.

The parents and parents-to-be mostly have a basic and possibly a middling level of education; there are hardly any among the more highly educated. 13% of the young women who attended a non-academic secondary school or who have comparable qualifications say they have a child, a further 3% already have two or three children (together: 16%). The figure is 7% for those with a middling level of education and just 1% for those with a higher level of education (18+ school-leaving certificate or university education) and none in this group have more than one child.

In the group of parents and parents-to-be, there is an above-average proportion – and this is connected to educational background – who had their first sexual contacts very early at age 14 or younger.

Background – German or non-German – does not play a role.

Early parenthood is – this can be seen very clearly among the young women – specifically an east German phenomenon: of the girls/young women from east Germany, 5% say they are currently pregnant and 14% say they already have one or more children. The comparison figures for the west are just 1% and 3% respectively. For the boys/young men the percentage is higher in east Germany than in the west, but not quite so clearly – fathers-to-be are generally a bit older than their partners anyway.

Those who already have a child and were asked about this experience have a more positive evaluation of the actual situation than young people who were asked about a potential pregnancy. For one third of the young women it was a positive and therefore most likely a desired event; a further 28% said the pregnancy was ‘not a bad thing’. Only 9% of the young women subjectively reported that it was a ‘disaster’. Even the one 17-year-old girl with a child described her reaction, when she had confirmation of her pregnancy, with ‘not a bad thing’. 
Young fathers do not agree quite as much with the assessment that it was a pleasing event (24%, and thus 9 percentage points less than for the young mothers). For them, the pregnancy was more likely ‘very unpleasant’ (plus 7 percentage points vis-à-vis the female respondents).

Of the girls/young women who are currently pregnant, half describe the event as ‘pleasing’. If this group did not contain 14–17-year-old girls from non-German households, the verdict would be even more positive, but the majority of these girls consider their pregnancy a disaster. Even among the women currently pregnant, the majority (more than 70%) are above the age of 20.

Boys/young men with a pregnant partner are less likely to conclude that the pregnancy is ‘pleasing’. More of them class it as a ‘disaster’, but it has to be said that the average age for these male respondents is younger than for the pregnant girls/young women, which should explain some of the differences.
Cornerstones of the study’s concept: methodological approach, execution, evaluation

Population and sample. This present study is a repeat study of seven predecessor studies (1980, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005 and 2009). The basic methodological construct of the initial survey has remained in place for all of the surveys. Surveying German girls and boys between the ages of 14 and 17 stood and stands at the heart of these studies; one parent from the same household was also interviewed in order to validate the statements and to supplement them with further aspects. For the girls this was the mother if possible, and for the boys the father. Particularly with regard to the relevance of contraception, a disproportionate gender sample was selected for the first survey in 1980, in that the focus was on girls (n=1,500 girls, n=1,000 boys).

This approach of gender imbalance has been maintained to this day; however, in other regards the original concept has been modified in subsequent surveys, as follows.

After Germany’s reunification there was a big interest in highlighting the needs of the young people in west and east and in observing trends of convergence, given their different circumstances and experiences. A regionally proportionate sample could not have done this for east Germany. Therefore there was a greater focus on interviews in east Germany over west Germany, in addition to the gender imbalance. This focus on the west/east comparison was maintained beyond the millennium.

In the late 1990s the growing number of young people with a migrant background became more and more relevant. It became clear that this group – we want to make statements about all young people in Germany – had to be taken into account, not least because the services offered by the BZgA to support sexuality education have to be tailored specifically for this target group. This fact was accommodated in the sample in that alongside the main survey of German young people, an initial attempt was made in 1998, after which it became a regular feature, to include a separate, smaller sample of young people with foreign citizenship. Over the following years the definition changed: the criterion of ‘citizenship’ was replaced by ‘background’. Up until the 2009 survey the sample stuck with the criterion ‘citizenship’ (while the evaluation already started using ‘background’ (migrant background) in 2005; more about this under ‘evaluation’). In the current survey the criterion ‘background’ was used in generating the samples.

The deliberate inclusion of young people of non-German backgrounds as well as the expansion of the age group from 14–17-year-olds to 14–25-year-olds required a more complex survey setup than before. Relevant criteria to define the main target groups were no longer just gender but also the distinction between adolescents and young adults as well as the criterion ‘background’. From the combination of the three main criteria ‘gender’, ‘age group’ and ‘background’ we obtained eight sub-groups for which there was a set number of interviews, regardless of their actual distribution in the young population (non-proportionate sample).
The sizes of the individual subgroups are displayed in the following diagram:

**Study Profile**
Sample 14–25-year-olds – target sizes

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The decision in favour of fixed target figures for the individual subgroups derived from the fact that when the data are evaluated, we wanted to have large enough case numbers for certain subgroups, for example the subgroup of those who are sexually experienced, so that we could obtain meaningful results.

In addition to the interviews of the adolescents and young adults, we interviewed one parent of each 14–17-year-old with a German background. We did not interview a parent of the adolescents with a migrant background since there would be bigger language problems here, and the compulsory requirement of a combined interview of the adolescent and the parent probably would have led to a greater distortion of the adolescent sample.

The target people were chosen using the quota method. The quota method is a standard empirical method for target groups that represent only a small – and also very mobile – section of the resident population, such as adolescents and young adults. The quota characteristics for the target participants of German background were gender, age and education. Generally speaking the interviewer locations were taken as the base for the regional distribution: with regard to the criteria state, administrative district, and size of the village/town/city, the composition of the interviewer locations correspond to the grid of networks of the master sample of the ADM (the association of German market-research institutes). Membership to the subsamples of adolescents and young adults of non-German background was determined by a set of several questions: either the adolescent/young adult her/himself possessed non-German citizenship or at least one of the parents had a non-German citizenship at (their own) birth. The quota characteristics for recruiting adolescents and young adults
of non-German background were gender, age and the characteristic ‘nationality’. The latter character-
istic was used to make sure that the most common migrant groups were sufficiently represented
in the sample (particularly adolescents/young adults with a Turkish migrant background, the largest
migrant group in Germany). The basic requirement for participating in the survey was that the sub-
jects had a sufficient knowledge of German in order to understand and answer the questions in the
questionnaire.

The statistical bases for the set quotas come from different publications by the Statistisches Bun-
desamt (Federal Office of Statistics), since no one statistic contained all of the characteristics at the
same time in the required form.

Generally speaking the actual figures for the individual sub-samples correspond to the desired fig-
ures. Only in one of the eight sub-samples was the required case number (minimally, n=1,495 in-
stead of 1,500 interviews) not reached (German girls), but generally it was slightly bigger. Among
the young men there were quite a lot more interviews.

**Study Profile**
Sample 14–25-year-olds – comparison between target and actual interview numbers

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant background</td>
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A total of 6,065 interviews were conducted, 3,568 with adolescents and 2,497 with young adults. In
addition there were 2,275 interviews with the parents of the German adolescents – however, their
data are not part of this report.
Questionnaire. When developing the questionnaire for the present study, two premises had to be taken into account. Firstly, the current study presents a continuation of the trend survey on youth sexuality for 14–17-year-olds, as was first implemented in 1980 and further developed from 1996 onwards, so that the tool could be used for a continuous observation of the attitudes and behaviours of the adolescents with regard to sexuality and contraception. Continuing with this trend was a major purpose of the current investigation. Secondly, the expansion of the age bracket to include 18–25-year-olds meant that the concept of the questionnaire had to be altered, since the circumstances of this target group are in many ways different from those of the 14–17-year-olds. This had to be taken into consideration when designing the questionnaire. Thus the questionnaire contains many splits – some of the questions were aimed only at the younger respondents (e.g. they were asked in more detail about their sexuality education), others were aimed only at the older respondents (e.g. homosexual tendencies and attitudes towards children). Other subjects were put to the entire age spectrum: these particularly include the questions about the ‘first time’ and about contraception. However, the entire age spectrum were asked about their sexual experiences in general, because in the previous surveys of 14–17-year-olds, around a third of the 17-year-olds had not yet had sexual intercourse. With the expansion of the age bracket up to 25, we can now portray the continuous development into adulthood. The questionnaire for the parents of the 14–17-year-old German participants was adopted almost unchanged from 2010. The questionnaire was subjected to a pre-test prior to the actual survey.

Conducting the survey. The interviews of the main survey were conducted in the form of combined oral-written interviews by the interviewers of TNS as CAPI interviews, i.e. a computer-based programmed questionnaire on a laptop. The interviews were generally conducted where the interviewer lived. The survey period began on 8 April 2014 and ended on 6 August 2014.

Evaluation. The main step in preparing the empirically obtained data consisted in translating the disproportionate sample into a proportionate one. That was necessary in order to be able to make statements about the entirety of the girls/boys/young adults in Germany. Therefore the file was subjected to a weighting that got rid of the disproportionalities in the sample and turned it into a representative distribution. Part of the weighting process was checking the quota characteristics. Since even slight shifts in the age quotas can have a substantial effect in the longitudinal comparison – sexual experiences and, associated with them, also the entire area of contraception are very age-dependent – the characteristics of age and gender were included in the weighting. This ensured that the data are based on the actual composition of the age groups in the population, so that changes in the trend comparison are not based on differences in the composition of the sample but on actual differences in behaviour and attitudes.

By bringing together the sub-samples, it has been possible, for the first time since starting these surveys, to make statements about adolescents in general, or for example about ‘boys in total, regardless of background’. And since the samples from the expansion to include ‘young women and young men between the ages of 18 and 25’ were included in the re-weighting, it has now been possible to make statements about ‘young people between the ages of 14 and 25’.
Trend. The current results of the German adolescents were also used to continue the trend analysis. This entails a slight vagueness because the definition of the ‘German’ adolescent sample was based around ‘citizenship’ in the earlier surveys and therefore also included those young people of foreign background who had adopted German citizenship (and got rid of their old citizenship) by the time of the survey – at least in theory. Even if, as described above, the sample approach for young people with a migrant background in earlier surveys was based on the characteristic of ‘citizenship’, the 2005 evaluation started working with the characteristic of ‘background’ (migrant background). This had solid advantages with regard to content: it is evident that culturally traditional behaviours, ethical-moral attitudes and parenting styles do not disappear from one day to the next with the acquisition of German citizenship. The switch to the broader characteristic of ‘migrant background’, which takes into account non-German background back to the parent generation, therefore seemed the right choice, particularly with regard to the questions about sexuality education, sexual experiences and contraceptive behaviour.

The group of adolescents with a migrant background therefore consisted of two parts in 2005 and 2009: girls and boys with foreign citizenship on the one hand and those adolescents from the sample who had German citizenship, where it was clear from their socio-demographic answers that a migrant background was present via one or both parents. In the current survey the group was defined in such a way that it includes both groups right from the start. Therefore the trend comparison over the past ten years for young people with a migrant background is based on the same definition in all evaluations.

Notes about the representation. Since the percentages depicted have been rounded to whole numbers, they may not always add up to exactly 100. For the same reason ‘top two values’ (by adding two categories together such as ‘very satisfied’ and ‘largely satisfied’) could deviate from the sum of the individual categories displayed. For questions that allowed multiple answers, the percentages added together may in the nature of things add up to more than 100.

Where data are present from previous studies, the survey results are shown as part of a trend comparison. This is particularly true for the subgroup of German 14–17-year-olds.
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