

» Youth Sexuality 9th Iteration

Sexuality Education and Contraceptive Advice at Home

The Federal Centre for Health Education's (BZgA) representative study Youth Sexuality 9th Iteration is a representative repeat survey. A large-scale survey of young people, their parents and young adults was launched for the ninth time in the summer of 2019. It follows on from predecessor studies conducted between 1980 and 2014. The goal of the study is to acquire reliable data about the attitudes and behaviours of young people in the Federal Republic of Germany with regards to sexuality and contraception.

The home plays an important role for young people when it comes to sexuality education and contraceptive advice. Parents are important confidants for their children and a central source of advice regarding questions about sexuality and contraception. The results of the Youth Sexuality Study reveal what role mothers and fathers play in the year 2019 and to what extent cultural or religious backgrounds influence parental sexuality education and contraceptive advice. This fact sheet presents the core results about sexuality education and contraceptive advice in the home, largely for participants between the ages of 14 and 17, but on occasion also for participants between the ages of 18 and 25.

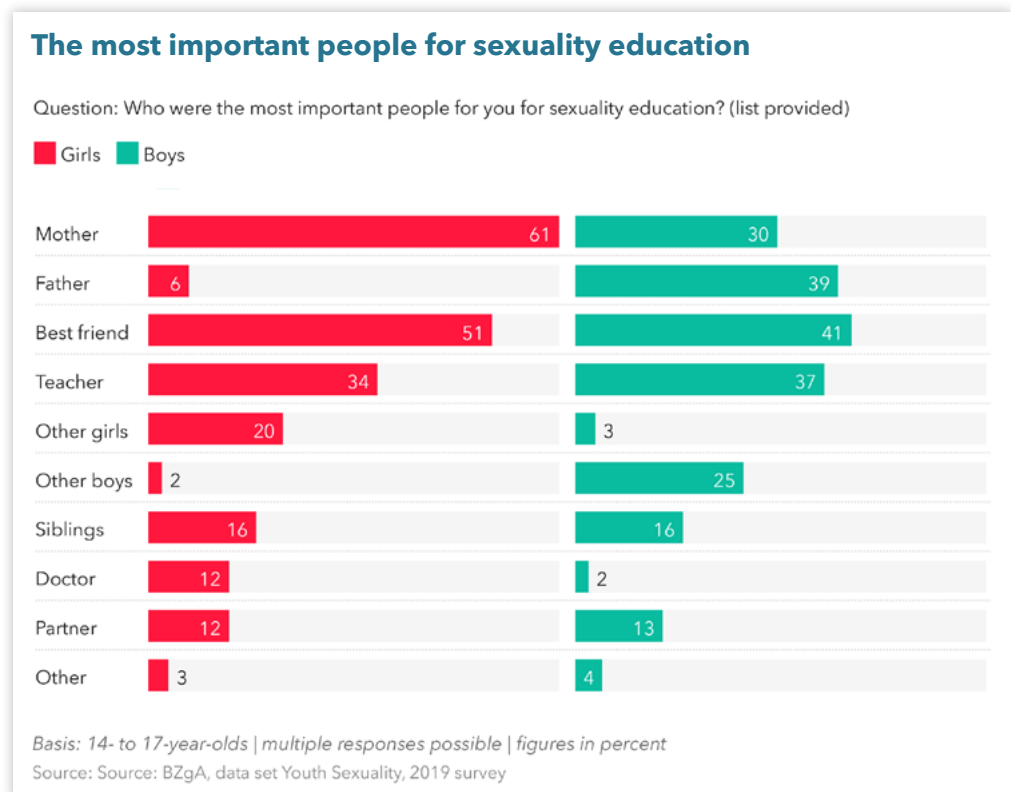
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Result 1

Parents are the most important sources for sexuality education.

The majority of young people say that their parents are among the most important people for them in matters of sexuality education (56 %).

Figure 1



For the girls between 14 and 17 it continues to be primarily their mother (61 %) who is the most important reference person for sexuality education. The second-most common source is the best friend (51 %); everyone else plays a lesser role. The significance of their father in this regard is negligible (6 %) (see Figure 1).

For the boys between 14 and 17 there are different preferences: although their father (39 %) is almost as frequently cited as the best friend (41 %) for those who play an important role in providing sexuality education. But the father's role here is hardly comparable to that of the mother for her daughter. For the boys, teachers also hold a similar significance (37 %) compared to their father (see Figure 1).

[See Youth Sexuality 9th Iteration - Fact Sheet 'Sexuality Education at School'](#)

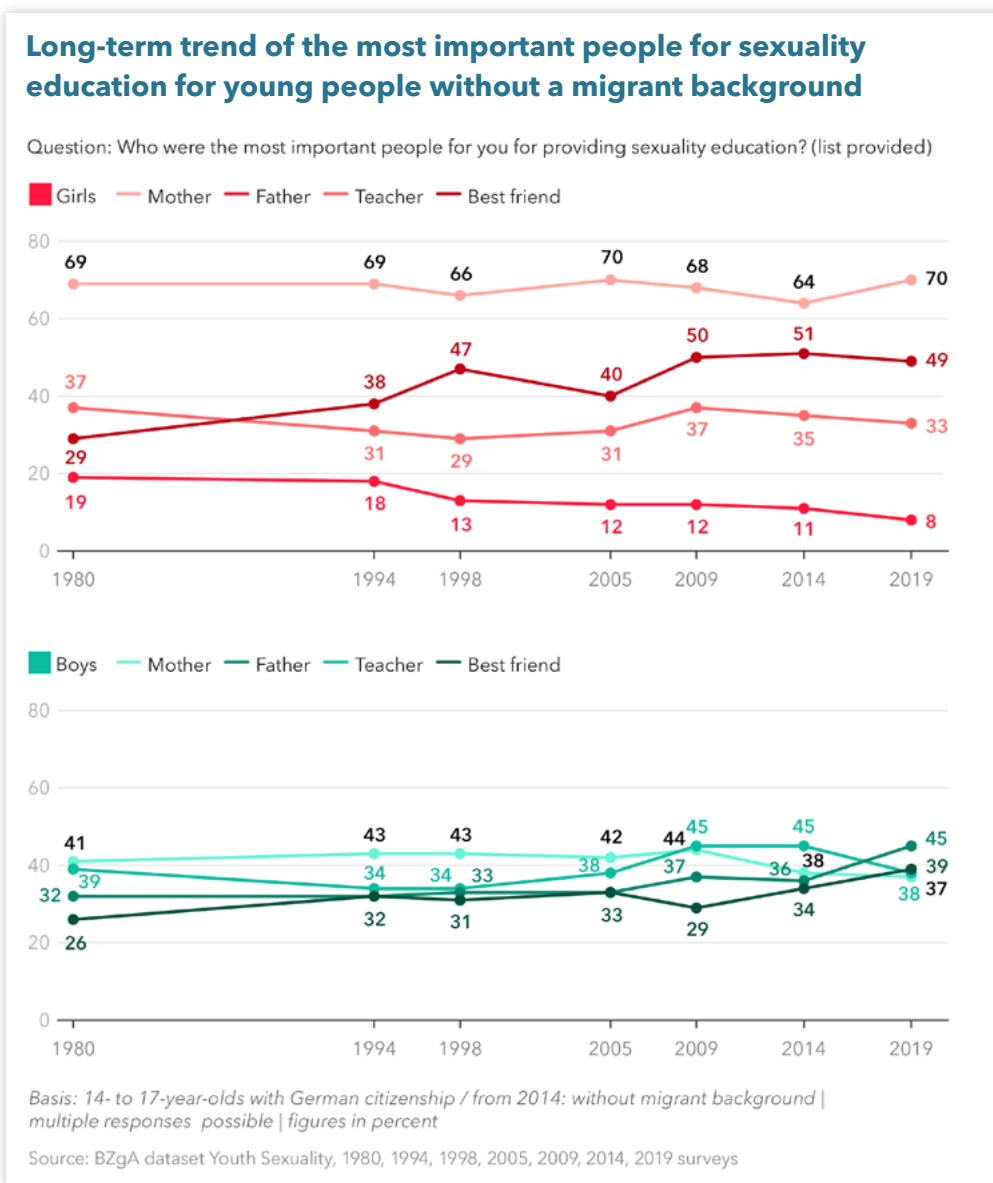


Result 2

Fathers are becoming more significant for sexuality education questions - but only for their sons.

Mothers have decreased in significance when it comes to being reference people for sexuality-related questions for their sons. The current survey marks the first year in which the fathers have overtaken the mothers in significance (39% versus 30%) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2



Result 3

Whether or not parents are important sources of sexuality education also depends on cultural background.

Cultural background, denominational influences and religious ties

The characteristics of denominational influences and religious ties must be considered when interpreting the results. One in four young people without a migrant background lacks a religious denomination; a further (46 %) are Protestant, and 28 percent are Catholic. Among the young people with a migrant background one in three are Protestant or Catholic, a further 35 percent are Muslim and 18 percent are members of other religious denominations. 12 percent have no religious denomination. There are also differences between the groups when it comes to the strength of the religious tie: 9 percent of the young people without a migrant background say they have 'close ties' to their religion, while 33 percent of young people with a migrant background say the same. Therefore, the cultural background of young people with and without a migrant background differs significantly.

The vast majority of the girls without a migrant background in this survey confirm the importance mothers were given in previous surveys with regard to sexuality education (70 %). Among the girls with a migrant background the mother is cited as a source of education significantly less often (43 %) (see Figure 3). In addition to people from their circle of peers, teachers in particular play an important role for girls with a migrant history (35 %).

For boys without a migrant background both their mother and their father are important sources of information about sexuality (37 % and 45 % respectively). For boys between the ages of 14 and 17 with a migrant background, peers are particularly significant - meaning best friends (45 %), other boys (32 %) and siblings (21 %). Among the possible people from the set of adult options it is merely teachers (36 %) who play an important role (see Figure 3).

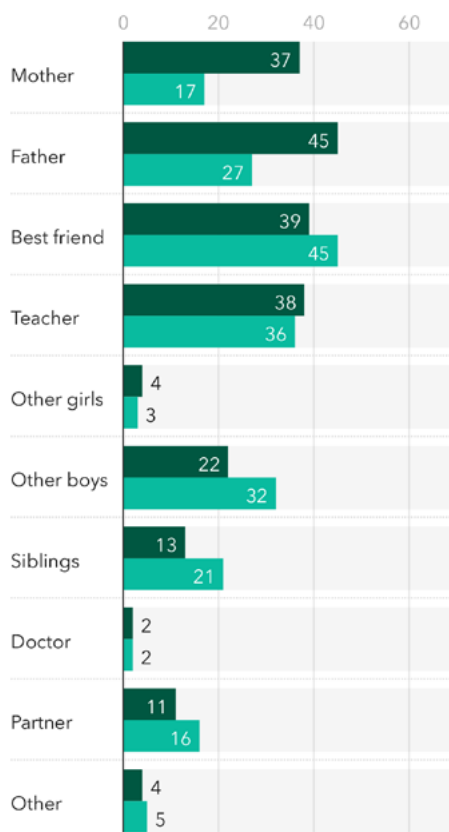
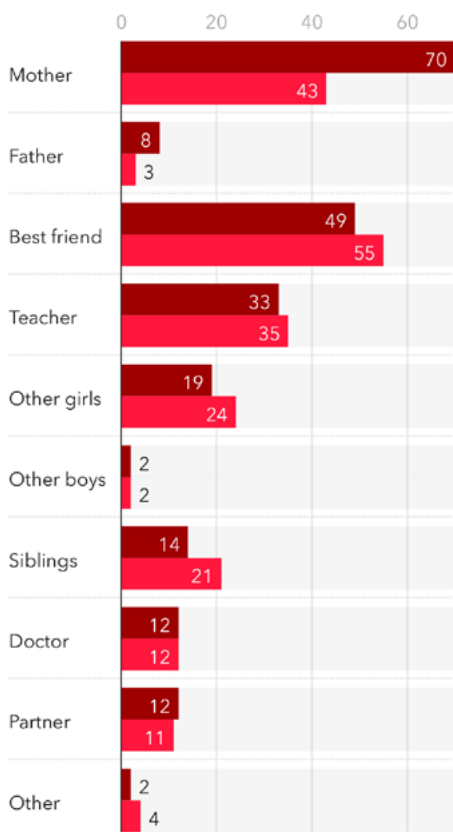
Figure 3

People providing sexuality education (by the young people's cultural background)

Question: Who were the most important people for you for providing sexuality education? (list provided)

■ Without a migrant background
 ■ With a migrant background

■ Without a migrant background
 ■ With a migrant background



Basis: 14- to 17-year-old girls | multiple responses possible | figures in percent

Basis: 14- to 17-year-old boys | multiple responses possible | figures in percent

Source: BZgA, data set Youth Sexuality, 2019 survey

[See Youth Sexuality
9th Iteration - Fact Sheet
'Sexuality Education
at School'](#)



A further striking finding is that girls with a Turkish background at home often experience significantly less openness and less sexuality education than young people from families with other or no migrant backgrounds. Only 29 percent of them cite their mothers as sources of sexuality education (girls from families with a migrant history total: 43 %). As for the boys, teachers are able to fill this gap for the girls with a Turkish background (38 %).

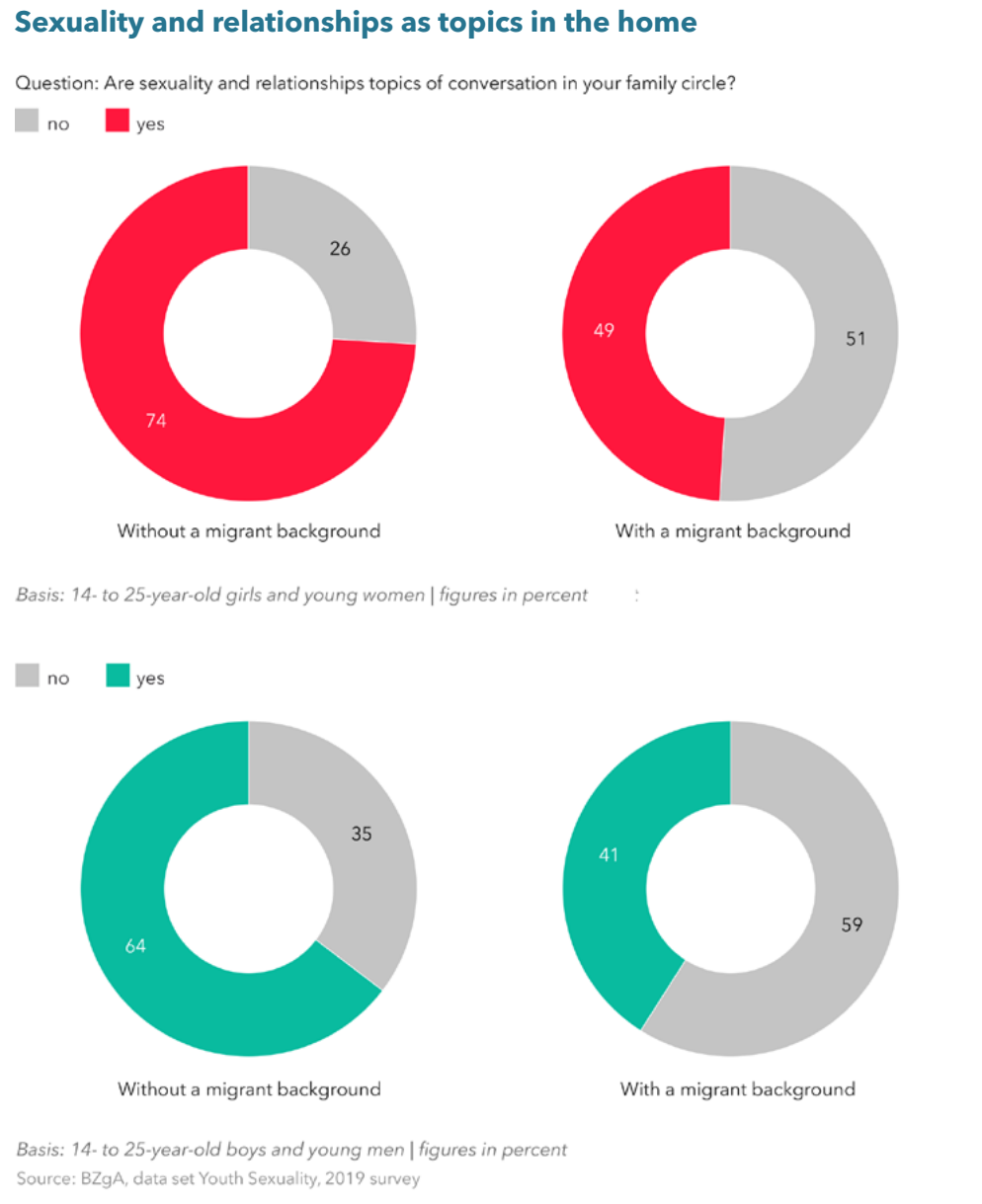
School as a place of sexuality education therefore offers an important compensator to girls and boys with a migrant background whose parents are a less relevant part of their sexuality education - more so than this is the case for the young people without a migrant background.

In homes with a migrant background, a lower level of education, close religious ties and a Muslim denomination, conversations about sexuality and relationships are rarer.

Differences with regard to the cultural background of the adolescents and young adults also become apparent with regard to questions about the extent to which they can talk about sexuality and relationships within the family. 62 percent of all respondents say they can, where girls and young women are more likely to report an open attitude in the home than boys and young men (67 % versus 57 %).

If the respondents' migrant background is taken into account as an additional factor, we can see significant differences: it is true for both sexes that conversations about sexuality and relationships occur in less than half of the families with a migrant background and they are rarer for boys and young men than for girls and young women (41 % versus 49 %) (see Figure 4). The 14- to 25-year-old female (36 %) and male respondents (28 %) with Turkish roots fall way below the average for those with a migrant background - in these homes sexuality is addressed comparatively rarely.

Figure 4



The data of the Youth Sexuality Study further show that the higher the level of education of the adolescents and young adults surveyed is, the more likely it is for there to be communication about sexual topics at home. The percentages range from 49 percent (basic level of education) to 59 percent (moderate level) all the way to 67 percent (higher level). While the education factor plays almost no role among the girls and young women without a migrant background (discrepancy: 4 percentage points), it is significant among the female respondents with a migrant history (difference of 15 percentage points).

Among the boys and young men the educational differences have an even clearer impact: if there is no migrant background, the percentage of families with open communication fluctuates by 15 percentage points depending on level of education. If the family has a migrant background, this figure even rises to 29 points. This means it is the boys and young men with a migrant background and a basic level of education who are particularly likely to lack access to open conversation about sexual topics in the home (76%).

Openness within the family is also a cultural-religious question. Only 27 percent of the respondents with a Muslim denomination said that there are open conversations about sexuality and relationships in the home; when the religious ties are close, this figure drops to just 19 percent. A similar effect regarding the strength of the religious ties - but to a greater extent - can also be observed among the adolescents and young adults with a Catholic denomination (close ties: 52%; loose ties: 71%). No such influence can be seen among those of a Protestant persuasion (close ties: 76%; loose ties: 73%). Among those without a religion 66 percent said they had an open home.

Result 5

The contraceptive advice given by parents is also correlated with their cultural and religious background as well as with their educational level.

After presenting the general conversational situation in families with regard to sexual topics, this section will deal specifically with the contraceptive advice given by parents.

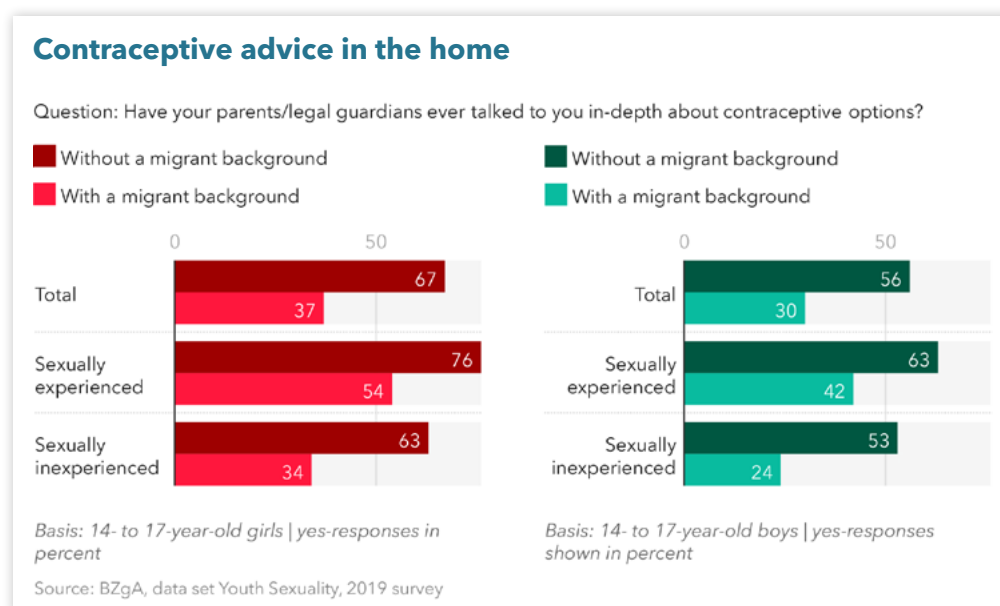
At 53 percent, the majority of the girls and boys between 14 and 17 say that they have received in-depth advice from their parents about contraceptive options. Analogously to the parents' general conversational openness, the girls are more likely to report advisory conversations than the boys (58 % versus 48 %).

Here too the data of the Youth Sexuality Study show that young people from families with a migrant background are significantly less likely to receive contraceptive advice (see Figure 5): among the girls with a migrant background only one in three say they received such advice (37 %) - among the girls without migrant background the figure is two thirds (67 %). Among their male peers these discrepancies are similar, but weaker (30 % versus 56 %).

A further point of note is that families with a Turkish background are significantly less likely to offer contraceptive advice than families with other backgrounds: the girls differ by 13 percentage points, the boys by 12 percentage points from the average of young people with a migrant background. This means that only 18 percent of the boys from Turkish families were able to draw on parental advice about contraception.

Contraception is also less likely to be spoken about between parents and their children in families where there are close religious ties - regardless of denomination. Depending on the sex of the respondents there are differences of up to 27 percentage points here.

Figure 5

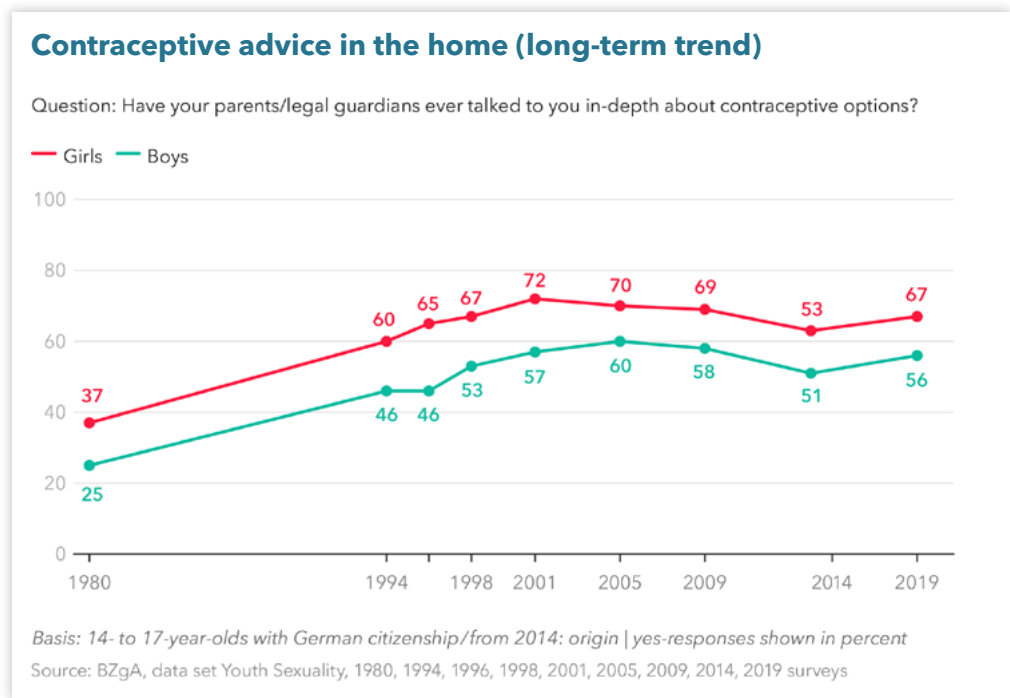


If the young people have already gathered some sexual experiences, they are significantly more likely to confirm having received advice in the home. This is equally true for the girls and boys with and without a migrant background (see Figure 5). Generally speaking, the difference between the sexually inexperienced and the sexually experienced among the young people without a migrant background is substantially less (up to 13 percentage points) than among young people with a migrant background (up to 20 percentage points). This can be viewed as an indication that in families with a migrant history the decision to provide contraceptive advice is based on need.

The young people's level of education also has a partly significant influence on whether a conversation about contraception takes place in the home - however, less so among the girls without migrant background, where the likelihood of such a conversation is comparatively high even among those with a basic level of education (64 % versus total 67 %). Boys without a migrant background on the other hand are less likely to receive contraceptive advice from a parent if they have or are trying to obtain a more basic level of education (47 %). Among the moderate or higher level of education these figures are 55 percent and 60 percent respectively. With differences of 9 percentage points among the girls and 7 percentage points among the boys, young people with a migrant history and a (desired) basic level of education are also less likely to receive contraceptive advice in the home than their peers with a higher level of education.

Despite these limitations the long-term trend shows that the decline in parental contraceptive advice seen five years ago may only have been an outlier (see Figure 6). Compared to 2014 the number of girls and boys who say they have received contraceptive advice from their parents has gone up again.

Figure 6

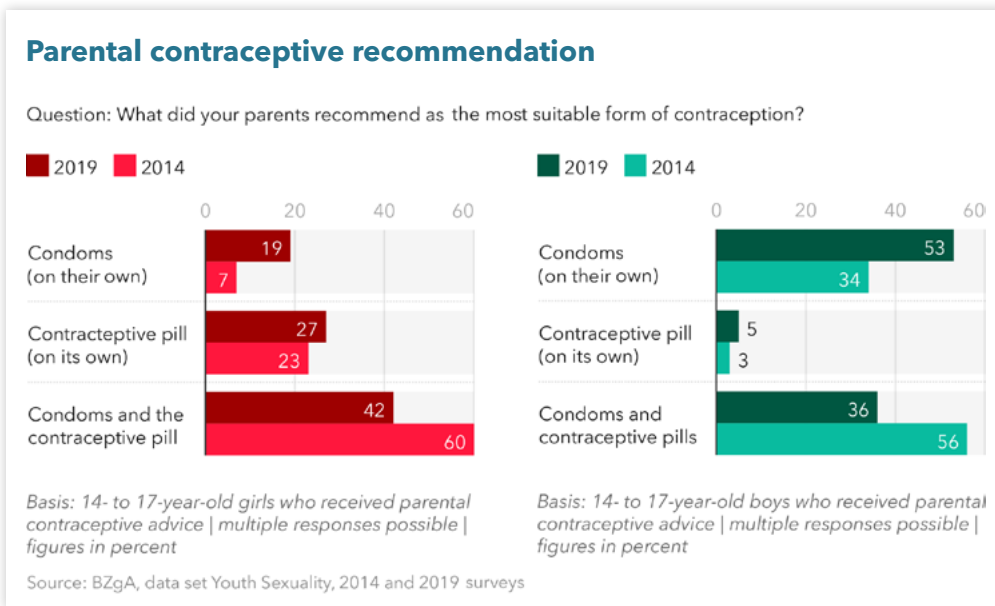


Result 6

Parents are most likely to recommend condoms, there is a significant decrease in recommendations for the contraceptive pill.

The adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17 were also asked what recommendations they received from their parents as the ‘most suitable form of contraception’. According to these responses, parents are advocating condoms more strongly than even in 2014 and alongside this they are less likely to recommend the joint use of condoms and the contraceptive pill (see Figure 7). This development is in line with the current contraceptive behaviour trends of young people in Germany, which exhibit a significant decrease in both the sole use of the contraceptive pill and its joint use with condoms.

Figure 7



The vast majority of the young people who received contraceptive advice from their parents feel positive about the conversations. A mere 6 percent of all those surveyed said they were not fully satisfied with the advice.

It is interesting in this regard that there is no significant correlation in the data of the Youth Sexuality Study between the satisfaction with the parental advice and any demographic factors such as age, level of education, family constellation, religious ties, etc. This means that if parents give their daughters and sons advice, then that advice is evidently almost always considered helpful.

Result 7

Girls are also informed by their mothers about the free availability of the contraceptive pill and the 'morning-after pill', but here too religious denomination and/or migrant background play a role.

The 14- to 17-year-old girls who know about the free availability of the contraceptive pill for young people are most likely to have learned about this at home (38%), followed by at school (32%) and from a doctor (28%) (see Figure 8). To compare: 46 percent of the boys who knew about this fact learned it at school, 17 percent at home.

While the mother (41%) and school (39%) are the most important sources of information for the younger girls - those aged 14 and 15 - doctors (36%) are cited more frequently than the mother (33%) as the most important sources of information by the girls between the ages of 16 and 17.

For this topic too there are differences in the parental advice received, depending on cultural background. 14- to 17-year-old girls with a migrant background and/or from Muslim homes are significantly less likely to have heard about the free availability of the contraceptive pill from their mothers: 24 percent of the girls with a migrant background and 11 percent of the respondents with a Muslim denomination affirmed this (compared to 38% to 41% among those of another/no denomination and/or without a migrant background). For girls with Muslim roots and/or a migrant background school is the most important source of information about the free availability of the contraceptive pill (39% and 35% respectively).

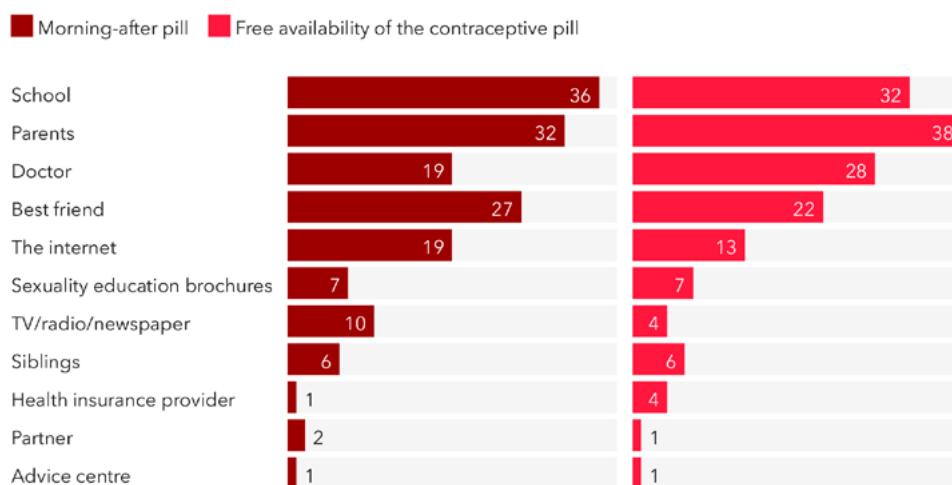
[See Youth Sexuality 9th Iteration - Fact Sheet 'Sexuality Education at School'](#)



With regard to the ‘morning-after pill’ mothers (31 %) are the most important source of information for 14- to 17-year-old girls after school (36 %) (see Figure 8). Here too girls from Muslim homes and families with a migrant background are much less likely to be informed by their parents about this option of emergency contraception: 18 percent of the girls with a migrant background and 9 percent of the respondents with a Muslim denomination cite their parents as a source of information about this (compared to 30 % to 36 % among those of another/no denomination and/or without a migrant background). This information gap is also closed by the school (45 % among the Muslim denomination and 40 % among those with a migrant background).

Sources of information about the free availability of the contraceptive pill and the ‘morning-after pill’

Question: Where did you learn that health insurance companies pay for certain contraceptives? Where did you learn about the ‘morning-after pill’? From ...



Basis: 14- to 17-year-old girls who know about these options | multiple responses possible | figures in percent

Source: BZgA, data set Youth Sexuality, 2019 survey

Figure 8



References

Census UK (2019): Tolland, L. & Evans, J. (2019, February 21). *What is the difference between sex and gender?* Gov.uk; Office for National Statistics. Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/whatisthedifferencebetweensexandgender/2019-02-21> [accessed 3 April 2023]

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Notes on the data



- As the percentages shown has been rounded to whole numbers, it is possible that they may not add up to 100 percent.
- For the same reason the combined categories (e.g. 'very satisfied' and 'mostly satisfied') can deviate from the sum of the individual categories depicted.
- For questions where the respondents were able to pick several answers, the total figure can exceed 100 percent.
- Where data is available from previous surveys, the survey results are shown in a trend comparison. Because of how the samples were done it is possible to see the long-term trend covering almost 40 years for boys and girls between 14 and 17 without a migrant background.
- Participants are deemed to have a migrant background if they themselves or at least one parent was born without German citizenship; this definition is also used by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2021).
- The level of education is determined by the (desired) qualifications the study participants were / are seeking at school based on the education system in Germany. Low: 9 years of school, most are around 15 years old when they leave (e.g. Hauptschule) Moderate: 10 years of school, most are around 16 years old when they leave (e.g. mittlere Reife). High: 12 to 13 years of school, most are 18 to 19 years old when they leave (e.g. Abitur).
- Because of the methodological design of the Youth Sexuality Study a further non-binary differentiation of gender has had to be left out. For this same reason, the term 'sex' (biological aspects, assigned by birth) continues to be used (in contrast to 'gender' in the sense of social construction, gender identity as personal internal perception of oneself) to enable statements on long-term trends (see also Census UK, 2019). This decision is purely a methodological necessity and not based on a lack of awareness of diversity here.

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The Research Project: Background, Research Team, Methodology

The Federal Centre for Health Education's (BZgA) representative study Youth Sexuality 9th Iteration is a repeat survey. In the summer of 2019 the ninth large-scale survey of young people, their parents and young adults began. A total of 6,032 interviews were conducted nationwide. Since 1980, the BZgA has been investigating the attitudes and behaviour of young people in the Federal Republic of Germany with regard to sexuality education, sexuality and contraception. This current study follows on from the previous years' studies with the explicit aim of illustrating trends.

Project profile

Client	Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA)
Project lead	Angelika Hessling, BZgA
Survey institute	Kantar GmbH
Survey population	Adolescents and young adults between the ages of 14 and 25
Survey method	Computer-supported combined oral-written survey; for the more intimate questions the questionnaire was to be filled out by the respondents without the interviewers being able to see.
Selection method	A disproportionately selected quota sample with regards to sex, age and migrant background
Sample of young people	6,032 interviews of which 3,556 were with adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17 and 2,476 with young adults between 18 and 25
Sample: parents	In the households of the 14- to 17-year-old adolescents without a migrant background one parent was also surveyed (2,422 interviews)
Weighting	All the data shown underwent a representative weighting in order to remove the sample's disproportionalities caused by the design.
Survey period	May to October 2019



More information about the study Youth Sexuality 9th Iteration Central results and further fact sheets

<https://www.sexualaufklaerung.de/en/english/projects/detail/youth-sexuality-9th-iteration/>