

Integrating Sexual Health in Primary Care: Why and How

Updated September 2024

Talking to Patients About Sexuality and Sexual Health

- Takeaways
 - Communication between health care providers and patients can improve sexual health: correlated with increased use of condoms; lack of communication about sex is a risk factor for HIV and STIs
 - Counseling guidelines: providers should...
 - Promote sexual health in clinical practice environments (posters, patient materials)
 - Provide patients with current information regarding sexual health
 - Participate in continuing education activities focused on sexual health
 - Be aware and respectful of their patients' sexual values and lifestyles
 - Understand how values of the health care provider or the clinical setting may influence practices and take care to provide unbiased and comprehensive care
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Patients' and Providers' Perspectives on Sexual Health Discussion in the United States: A Scoping Review

- Takeaways
 - Overall, patients see conversations about sexual health as essential and expect providers to bring it up. Patients report higher comfort with discussing sexual health than do providers
 - There is an unmet need for sexual health discussions, indicating that providers should integrate these discussions into their daily practice and not wait for patients to bring up the topic
 - This paper discusses several facilitators and barriers to sexual health communication
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Let's Talk About Sex: A Survey of Patients' Preferences When Addressing Sexual Health Concerns in a Family Medicine Residency Program Office

- Majority of patients prefer that medical providers initiate conversations about sexual health – easier when providers are same gender as patient, and are providers a patient has seen before
 - This study has the same finding – that patients, particularly older patients, expect providers to bring up sexual health

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'How To' Resources:

- CDC Clinicians' Quick Guide
 - [Discussing Sexual Health with Your Patients](#)
- Comprehensive guide from the National Coalition for Sexual Health
 - [Sexual Health and Your Patients: A Provider's Guide](#)
 - Intended to help primary care providers learn how to better incorporate sexual health discussions into adult and adolescent wellness visits
 - Additional NCSH tools available [here](#)
- ASHA: National Chlamydia Coalition
 - [How can I become more comfortable talking with patients about sex?](#)
 - [Tips for Communicating about Sexual Health](#)
- [Core Competencies in Sexual and Reproductive Health for the Interprofessional Primary Care Team](#)
 - *NYC PTC can share PDF if of interest
 - 50 primary care providers from different professions discussed sexual and reproductive health competencies for primary care team members
 - 26 core competencies were endorsed, encompassing professional ethics and reproductive justice, collaboration, SRH services and conditions affecting SRH
- [Sexual and Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents and Adults](#)
 - Reference tool with evidence-based best practices developed by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene geared towards health providers
- Adolescent focused tools
 - Children's Hospital of Philadelphia:
 - [Adolescent Welcome Letter](#)
 - [Primary Care Clinical Pathway for Evaluation & Treatment of STIs in Adolescents](#)
- Adolescent Health Initiative
 - [Starter Guides](#)
 - [Starter Guide: Adolescent Risk Screening](#)
- ASHA: National Chlamydia Coalition
 - [What's the best way to ask a parent to step out of the adolescent visit?](#)