



# THE SPECIFIC ETHICAL PROBLEMS IN GYNECOLOGY AND SEXUOLOGY OF NOT ONLY YOUNG ADULTS

## SZCZEGÓLNE PROBLEMY ETYCZNE W GINEKOLOGII I SEKSUOLOGII NIE TYLKO U OSÓB MŁODYCH

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### ABSTRACT

**Aim.** The aim of this study was to examine whether or not responsibility and ethics are associated with sex according to young adolescents.

**Material and methods.** A survey was conducted among healthy volunteers, 209 people aged  $24.8 \pm 4.8$ , who were not victims or perpetrators of sexual crimes or sexual violence asking them about their views on sexual matters.

**Results.** The work presents views on sexual issues.

**Conclusions.** The studies in descriptive sexual ethics similar to the discussed survey are relevant for sexology and clinical ethics as a whole, in particular for the sense of responsibility and awareness regarding STDs, sexual preferences and sexual crimes.

KEYWORDS: sexology, ethics, sex.

### STRESZCZENIE

**Cel.** Celem pracy było zbadanie, czy odpowiedzialność i etyka u osób dorosłych i nastolatków są związane z płcią.

**Materiał i metoda.** W badaniach brało udział 209 osób w wieku  $24,8 \pm 4,8$  roku. Ankieta została przeprowadzona wśród zdrowych ochotników, którzy nie byli ofiarami ani sprawcami przestępstw seksualnych lub przemocy seksualnej.

**Wyniki.** W pracy przedstawiono poglądy na temat kwestii seksualnych.

**Wnioski.** Badania opisowej etyki seksualnej podobne do przeprowadzonych są istotne dla seksuologii i etyki seksualnej, szczególnie ważne jest w edukacji seksualnej kształtowanie poczucia odpowiedzialności i świadomości dotyczącej chorób przenoszonych drogą płciową.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: seksuologia, etyka, płć.

### Introduction

Highlanders say, 'Some people did not like Tischner, probably because he used to see the world differently' [1]. In his works, this prominent philosopher has spoken many times on issues related to the sexual ethics. The study on factual ethos of sexual morality plays crucial role both in sexual ethics and sexology (including forensic sexology). Sexuality is strongly connected to responsibility.

Sexual behavior is regulated by law which sanctions certain sexual conduct.

Thus, sexuality is believed to be connected to responsibility not only from an ethical, but also legal perspective. In different countries and environments, an act can at the same time fall within many different regulations (or does not fall within any) and therefore can be interpreted differently.

Polish criminal law enumerates the following types of sex crimes:

- 1) forced sexual intercourse without factual consent of one of the partners (rape, taking advantage of the lack of conscience of other party, his or her helplessness, dependency or tragic situation, etc.),
- 2) pedophilia (sexual activity towards a situation, etc.),
- 3) exhibitionism (sexual behavior displayed in public or in attendance of children),
- 4) incest,
- 5) distribution of the pornographic content,
- 6) crimes which aim at engaging other person in prostitution (facilitating prostitution, aiding prostitution).

Legal regulations of the sexual conducts refer back to the sense of responsibility [2].

According to Tischner, sex is a certain mood, an experience, it is corporeality, but it also is a certain type of responsibility, which is brought into the world by a human being [3].

The word sex means gender. According to Maria Beisert, sex and problems related to it accompany every man through their childhood, adolescence and old age [4]. Tischner writes: 'Sex goes much deeper, it touches people. It seems we could say sex is a particular value which determines the way of manifesting good will of a person' [5]. Therefore, sexuality specifies as well the moral ethos of a human existence in this world. It determines two dimensions of sensitivity: axiological and ethical.

From an early age, a man should be taught to acquire and choose responsibly things which serve their self development as well as, or maybe especially, things referring to his or her sexuality. What is sex according to a modern man? How does he/she perceive responsibility in sex? On the basis of the abovementioned Tischner's thought which points out to an experience, mood, corporality but also responsibility, there has been conducted an internet survey.

## Material and methods

209 people have been surveyed. The study has been carried out using an online questionnaire filled in by volunteers. It is worth underlying that those people neither were victims nor perpetrators of the sexual violence. Additionally, there has been no pathology in their sexual preferences which might have an impact on the results of the survey.

The questionnaire consists of 6 questions. First five of them concern sex assessment using a 6 grade's scale (a higher number means a higher note). The last one is an open question concerning the way of seeing sex by participants of the survey. Age and gender of the participants are also included.

Quantitative variables are described using the arithmetic mean, deviation from standard parameters (SD), median, minimal and maximal value. Because of the data characteristics (lack of the normal distribution), in order to assess differences between average values of the two independent samples (groups), a Mann-Whitney test has been conducted. The statistical analysis has been carried out with Statistica 10 PL program. Statistically significant value was  $p < 0.05$ .

## Results

There were 209 participants, including 157 (75.1%) women and 52 (24.9%) men.

The age of the surveyed persons oscillated between 13 and 64. The average age of the surveyed persons

was  $24.8 \pm 4.8$ . Half of them was below 24, whereas the other half was above 24 (median = 24.0). While the average age of women was  $24.8 \pm 4.0$ , the average male age was  $25.0 \pm 6.7$ . The details are presented in **table 1**.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics concerning the surveyed person's age

Age	N valid	Average	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
All	209	24.8	4.8	24.0	13	64
Women	157	24.8	4.0	24.0	17	42
Men	52	25.0	6.7	24.0	13	64

Source: author's own analysis

## Sex assessment

All of the surveyed persons gave the highest note to 'sex is an experience' – the average score  $4.4 \pm 0.9$ . The surveyed persons gave the lowest note to 'sex is a mood' – the average score  $2.9 \pm 1.7$  as presented in **table 2**.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics regarding the surveyed persons' assessment of sex

Sex assessment – All surveyed persons	N valid	Average	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
Sex is a certain mood [points]	209	2.9	1.7	3.0	0	5
Sex is an experience [points]	209	4.4	0.9	5.0	0	5
Sex is an experiment [points]	209	4.3	0.9	5.0	0	5
Sex is corporality [points]	209	4.2	1.1	5.0	0	5
Sex is a certain type of responsibility that a human being brings into the world [points]	209	3.8	1.5	4.0	0	5

Source: author's own analysis

Women also gave the highest note to 'sex is an experience' – the average score  $4.4 \pm 0.9$ , whereas the lowest one went to 'sex is a mood' – average score  $2.9 \pm 1.6$  (**Table 3**).

**Table 3.** Descriptive sex assessment by women

Sex assessment – women	N valid	Average	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
Sex is a certain mood [points]	157	2.9	1.6	3.0	0	5
Sex is an experience [points]	157	4.4	0.9	5.0	0	5
Sex is an experiment [points]	157	4.3	0.9	5.0	0	5
Sex is corporality [points]	157	4.3	1.1	5.0	0	5
Sex is a certain type of responsibility that a human being brings into the world [points]	157	3.9	1.4	4.0	0	5

Source: author's own analysis

Just like women, man gave the highest note to 'sex is an experience' – the average score  $4.4 \pm 0.8$ , whereas the lowest one went to 'sex is a mood' – average score  $2.6 \pm 1.7$  (**Table 4**).

**Table 4.** Descriptive sex assessment by men

Sex assessment – men	N valid	Average	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
Sex is a certain mood [points]	52	2.6	1.7	3.0	0	5
Sex is an experience [points]	52	4.4	0.8	5.0	2	5
Sex is an experiment [points]	52	4.3	0.9	5.0	2	5
Sex is corporality [points]	52	4.2	1.1	5.0	0	5
Sex is a certain type of responsibility that a human being brings into the world [points]	52	3.4	1.6	4.0	0	5

Source: author's own analysis

### Number grade of sex and the surveyed persons' gender

Number grade has been compared to the surveyed persons' gender using Mann-Whitney test.

The median (and the average) grade of sex by women and men remains at a similar level. Statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) have been demonstrated only for 'Sex is a certain type of responsibility that a man brings into the world'. However, the calculated level of probability  $p = 0.037417$  remains similar to the assumed level of significance (0.05).

### Discussion

The problems concerning gender issues have always been a matter of a special, professional, interdisciplinary, and at the same time full of empathy – sensitivity and delicacy, approach. From the medical point of view, those matters belong to sexology – a study of human sexuality, andrology – a study of a man and gynecology – a study of a woman.

Sexology is a study concerned with human's emotional and sexual life as well as the formation and development of interpersonal boundaries. Sexology is an interdisciplinary study which perceives sexuality in various aspects: psychological, sociological, educational, ethical and moral, legal, ethnographic, anthropological, biological, religious and medical. It is concerned with every consequence stemming from the two sexes dichotomy. Sexology is strongly connected with sexual ethics – both, in prescriptive and descriptive aspects.

In a classical tradition, prescriptive ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with everything that is acceptable in human behavior, everything that is good or bad, right or wrong in a human strive for his or her goals [6]. In this perspective, sexual ethics means a set of norms and moral judgments from the field of sexology perceived as appropriate in a certain behavior. In other words, they are views seen as harmonious with one's conscience, individual inner rules and perception of the world. The definition of sexual ethics used to change its scope. Behavior once classified as unethical, can be

ethical or even should not be considered from the moral point of view today. Every discipline of science in order to develop and function properly needs to stick to the scientific standards. The research demonstrating regularities, changes which occur in the certain area are indispensable. It is being underlined that especially in sexology, sexual ethics and in sexual education the studies are vital and the discussion needs to verify the views. The study on the factual ethos in the field of sexual morality is significant both from the sexological and ethical (understood as prescriptive ethics) points of view.

The study indicates, that all surveyed persons evaluated the statement 'sex is an experience' with the highest note –  $4.4 \pm 0.9$  at average. 'Sex is a state of mind, a mood', on the other hand, was given the lowest note –  $2.9 \pm 1.7$  at average. A conclusion one can draw from these results is that sex, for the majority of surveyed persons, is not primarily connected with responsibility, which shows that moral questions stay in the background in this regard (responsibility is often seen as a fundamental value in sexual ethics – one of the authors to point this out was Karol Wojtyła, who did so in his study 'Love and responsibility'). The given notes were compared according to the surveyed persons' gender. The median (and the average) of valuation of sex in men and women is on a similar level. Statistically relevant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were only present in case of the statement 'sex is a certain type of responsibility, which is brought by the human being into the world'. However, a calculated level of probability  $p = 0.037417$  is close to the assumed relevance threshold (0.05).

Human sexuality is one of his basic goods – it makes a human being physically, psychologically and spiritually capable of creating a marriage and a family. In the medical (sexological), philosophical, ethical, psychological, sociological, pedagogical and legal sense, human sexuality was always an object of striving and sacrifice, as well as care and reflexion aiming at understanding and verbalization of it. Human's sexuality is closely connected to his/her natural environment, culture and spiritual expectations. A human's environment is a relatively permanent set of elements which surround a human being, important for his/her life and behaviour.

The human as a species is sexually differentiated, which has many consequences in many spheres of human existence. Being a man and a woman brings certain tasks with it, certain responsibility and openness to the other. Acting in accordance with the rules of complementarity and subsidiarity seems inevitable, so that a human being can fully develop and realize his/her mission [11].

Decisions made by humans with regard to one's corporality can largely determine one's life, sometimes

even the course of history. These decisions are often a consequence of environmental and parental (educational) influences in the period of psychosexual development. In adolescence – shaping one's psyche and soma. A young human stands before a difficult task of defining one's identity. The so-called 'hormonal storm' causes an outburst of first sexual desires, needs and expectations. The youths also realize that they themselves are an object of similar feelings from their peers. At that very time a human stands before a hard decision – whether to commence one's sexual life or abstain from it and wait. Such a decision, however, needs to be deliberate and voluntary, it should come from one's certainty and will. Such situation enables harmonious development. Human sexuality is a physiological and psychological fundament of the ability to love.

Some authors say that sexuality is a sort of language one must learn. What is important, the process of this 'education' happens in a different tempo for different people. Changes of sexual morality happen together with the evolution of culture and social life. The world of values and culture ideally expresses the strivings and affirmation of a contemporary human. Culture as a product of human activity is the best proof of the overall condition of the society, its possibilities for development. It also expresses the insecurities, happiness and strivings in the best possible manner.

The contemporary human, living in the era of a widespread cult of corporality, and consumptionism, the era of striving for one's comfort, rich and comfortable life, caring only for material values, needs and searches for the answers to questions such as – what is good and what is evil, searches and needs permanent values – and values connected with sexual ethics are of particular significance.

The knowledge of a sexologist can significantly contribute to the thorough understanding of the rules of sexual ethics. The rules of sexual ethics, on the other hand, are indispensable for the understanding of sexology as the science of gender – gender of a person [9–12].

## Conclusion

The studies from the field of descriptive sexual ethics, similar to the one conducted, are also of significant importance to sexology and gynecology.

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