

Postprint Version	1.0
Journal website	<a href="http://www.pec-journal.com/article/S0738-3991%2898%2990038-6/abstract">http://www.pec-journal.com/article/S0738-3991%2898%2990038-6/abstract</a>
Pubmed link	
DOI	10.1016/S0738-3991(98)90038-6

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## Doctor-patient communication during gynaecological outpatient consultations

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*Introduction.* In spite of sharpened legislation on improving the quality of doctor-patient communication, a lot of patients are dissatisfied with medical consultations and do not adhere to medical advice. Gynaecological consultations in which patients enter with health problems related to sexuality and reproduction, are most often criticised. Most criticism concerns the incongruency between doctors' and patients' instrumental and affective communication. However, insight into what actually happens during gynaecological consultations is lacking. Moreover, although figures are changing rapidly, at the moment still four out of five 'women's doctors' are men. Consequently, most gynaecological encounters concern mixed sex dyads. This may influence the way intimate health problems are discussed. The purpose of the present study was:

1. to describe doctor-patient communication in terms of instrumental and affective communication behaviours during gynaecological outpatient consultations;
2. to investigate the relationship between gynaecological communication and patient satisfaction with the consultation;
3. to examine whether same sex dyads differ from mixed sex dyads in terms of information exchange and reciprocity of affect.

*Methods.* Twenty one gynaecologists (13 men and 8 women) videotaped a total of 305 outpatient consultations. After the consultation, patients completed the Medical Interview Satisfaction Scale. Doctor-patient verbal communication was measured by an adapted version of the Roter Interaction Analysis System. In addition, patient directed gaze was measured and adjusted for the time the doctor was in sight.

*Results.* At the moment all videorecordings are observed and we are about to start analysing the data.

*Conclusion.* The results will give insight into the way gynaecologists and patients communicate and will yield implications for increasing the quality of gynaecological consultations. Results will also reveal whether interactants' sex either facilitates or prevents talking about intimate health issues.