25-year-long study confirms that our sex education is absolutely terrible

[https://metrouk2.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/ellenscott.jpg?quality=80&strip=all&w=40&h=40&crop=1](http://metro.co.uk/author/ellen-scott/)

[Ellen Scott for Metro.co.uk](http://metro.co.uk/author/ellen-scott/)Wednesday 14 Sep 2016 3:51 pm

The current state of our sex education is seriously lacking.

If you’re an adult, you probably weren’t taught about consent in your school sex ed. Gay and lesbian sex weren’t mentioned (although it’s started to be added to sex education curricula). The idea of pleasure got skipped over in favour of repeatedly telling us all about our massive risk of getting pregnant.

Most of us had really sh\*t experiences learning about sex at school, and had to make do on our own.

Now, a newly released study that took place over the last 25 years has confirmed it: sex education isn’t doing what it’s supposed to do, it’s got loads of problems, and something needs to be done.

The research, published in [BMJ Open](http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/9/e011329.abstract), examined 55 studies which took place between 1990 and 2015, focusing on young people’s view of the sex education they received.

They found that students all over the world – from the U.S. and the UK to Iran – overwhelmingly felt that their sex education didn’t meet their needs.

The main issues boiled down to a tendency to approach sex education in a cold, clinical way, treating sex as just a way to risk pregnancy and STIs and ignoring concepts like consent, orgasms, and sexual preference.

The emotional side of sex and how sexuality is viewed were rarely covered, and many students said homosexual relationships weren’t mentioned.

Students also pointed to the fact that the majority of teachers made to give sexual education aren’t sex and relationships experts, meaning they were often deeply uncomfortable discussing the topic. Students called the classes ‘cringey’, and said they didn’t feel comfortable discussing sex with teachers who quite clearly didn’t want to be teaching the subject.

Mixed gender sex ed classes caused issues, too, as the lessons all too often failed to cover gender-related issues and how women are unfairly treated when it comes to their sexuality.

Boys reported feeling worried that their classmates would judge them for failing to know things about sex, while young girls feared talking about sex in case their classmates thought they were ‘too’ experienced.

Girls who did speak up were often harassed, while boys messed around in class to cover up their discomfort.

The lessons here? Sexual education needs some serious changes.

The study’s researchers suggest a few simple things.

First off, hire specialist educators who are comfortable and knowledgeable when it comes to discussing sex. Having your PE teacher awkwardly chat about using a condom isn’t helpful.

Secondly, the researchers recommend splitting sex education lessons by gender, so students can be more comfortable discussing sexual issues without fearing judgement or harassment (we’d like to add that if schools do this, they should still make sure that young women and men are receiving the same information. Cis men need to know about periods and female pleasure, too).

And finally, the big one: sex education needs to stop being so negative.

Sex isn’t just a health risk, it can be an absolute delight.

Read more: <http://metro.co.uk/2016/09/14/25-year-long-study-confirms-that-our-sex-education-is-absolutely-terrible-6127971/#ixzz4OqdaONzo>