Size Matters

Docs aren't addressing obese women's sex lives.

September 12, 2011 By Cristina Gonzalez

Not only does packing on pounds put us at increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and osteoarthritis—it can also put a crimp in our sex lives, according to a study conducted by the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (a.k.a. Inserm) and published in the *British Medical Journal*.

While looking at the safety of prescribing hormonal contraceptives for young obese women, researchers found that increased body mass index (BMI, a measurement of height to weight ratio) could put these women's sexual health at risk.

"We found that obese women were 30 percent less likely than normal weight women to report a sexual partner in the last year," says Caroline Moreau, PhD, MD, an Inserm senior researcher. "We also found that obese women under 30 were 40 percent less likely to seek contraceptive health care services, 65 percent less likely to use oral contraceptives and four times more likely to report an unintended pregnancy."

Moreau believes self-esteem and body image issues stop obese women from seeking health care services. What's more, doctors might avoid prescribing effective hormonal-based contraceptives to obese women because docs think excess weight puts them at risk of cardiovascular disease. Combo birth control pills contain estrogen, which can raise some women's risk of stroke and heart attack.

That means unless clinics and physicians are trained to deliver alternative family planning counseling to obese patients and treat them using appropriate medical supplies (for example, special gynecological tables), an entire population of women may skip health care services. And that should make you (the wrong kind of) hot and bothered.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Obese-Women-Sex-21085-7646