

Ethical aspects in gynecology and sexology in the context of responsibility (a continuation of research inspired by Józef Tischner's thought)

Grażyna Jarząbek-Bielecka¹, Krzysztof Stachewicz², Agata Puszcz¹, Paulina Kozłowska¹, Jakub Mroczek¹, Katarzyna Plagens-Rotman¹, Witold Kędzia¹, Małgorzata Mizgier³, Paulina Wojtyła-Buciora⁴, Magdalena Pisarska-Krawczyk⁵, Ewa Jakubek⁶, Andrzej Wojtyła⁷

¹Clinic of Gynecology, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznan, Poland

²Department of Christian Philosophy, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan, Poland

³Department of Dietetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Physical Education, Poznan, Poland

⁴Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland

⁵Department of Nursing, Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland

⁶Department of Social Medicine and Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Calisia University, Kalisz, Poland

⁷Department of Organization and Management in Healthcare, Faculty of Health Sciences, Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznan, Poland

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Abstract

Introduction: Sexual behavior intersects with law, ethics, and responsibility. Inspired by Józef Tischner's view that sex is a mood, experience, and encounter – yet also a form of responsibility – the study explored how lay respondents (medical students) relate sexuality to responsibility. The survey was first conducted in 2013 and repeated in 2025 (declared the “Year of Tischner” in Poland).

Aim of the research: The study examines how lay medical students conceptualize responsibility within sexuality and explores the implications of these attitudes for gynecologic counselling, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy, and medico-legal considerations.

Material and methods: A questionnaire reflecting Tischner's concept assessed agreement on five statements using a 6-point scale (0–5; higher = stronger agreement): sex as a mood, emotional experience, personal encounter, corporeality, and responsibility brought into the world. A sixth, open-ended item asked “What is sex?”. Volunteers were neither perpetrators of sexual violence nor diagnosed with pathological sexual preferences. Descriptive and comparative analyses were performed, including gender-based comparisons; statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results and conclusions: The “Sex is an experience” statement received the highest rating (mean 4.4 ± 0.9), while “Sex is a mood” was rated the lowest (2.8 ± 1.6). Overall, gender was not primarily associated with responsibility. Median and mean ratings were broadly similar between women and men; a statistically significant difference emerged only for “sex as responsibility” ($p = 0.037$), a value close to the significance threshold. Comparative findings across the 2013 and 2025 samples are presented in the full manuscript. In this descriptive sexual-ethics study, responsibility was not a dominant element in respondents' understanding of sex.

Introduction

In reference to the fact that the year 2025 was declared the Year of Tischner by a resolution of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, the idea of continuing research on views on sex inspired by the thought of Józef Tischner, according to which “sex is a certain mood, emotional experience, personal encounter, it is corporeality, but it is also a certain type of responsibility that a person brings with him into the world (...)” [1]. Based on this thought, a questionnaire was prepared and conducted among volunteers regarding views on the topic related to the sense of responsibility in sexual relationships.

The study was conducted for the first time in 2013 and repeated in 2025.

The highlanders say: “Some probably did not like Tischner, because he looked at the world in a completely different way than they did.” Józef Tischner, an outstanding philosopher, has repeatedly commented on topics related to sexual ethics in his works. Both in this sexual ethics and sexology (including forensic sexology), research on the actual ethos in the field of sexual morality is extremely important. Sexuality is therefore inextricably linked to responsibility [1].

Sexual behavior is regulated by law. Law contains provisions that prohibit certain sexual acts under the threat of criminal sanctions.

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Table 1. Number and percentage of respondents by gender

Sex	N	%
Woman	157	75.1
Man	52	24.9
Total	209	100.0

The word “sex” means gender. According to Maria Beisert, gender, and the problems associated with it, accompany every person through childhood, adolescence, maturity, and old age [2]. Tischner wrote: “Gender goes much deeper, it touches the person. It seems that we are most appropriate to say that gender is a special value that determines the way in which a person’s goodwill is manifested in the world” [1].

Sexuality, therefore, also defines the moral ethos of human existence in the world, it defines the two worlds of axiological and ethical sensitivity.

In meetings that take place within the horizon set by gender, sex plays a big role, which is both a gift and a task. From an early age, a person should learn to master and choose responsibly what contributes to his/her development, also, and perhaps especially, in matters concerning gender and sexuality. What is sex in the meaning for the modern man? What does gender responsibility mean to him/her? According to Tischner’s thought, quoted at the beginning of this work, sexuality involves emotional experience, personal encounter, mood, and corporeality, but above all responsibility as its defining ethical dimension – on this basis, a questionnaire was prepared and completed online by the study participants [1, 3].

The analysis of the results of the conducted research focused on demonstrating the attitude towards the quoted thought of Józef Tischner (first of all, whether sex is associated with responsibility) and a comparative analysis of the survey responses obtained in 2013 and 2025. An attempt was made to demonstrate whether the perception of this issue from the point of view of sexual ethics, which is also important in the context of gynecology, has changed significantly over the past 12 years.

Material and methods

The study involved 318 people, including 235 women and 83 men aged 13 to 68. The questionnaire was completed in the period from 4 to 18 November 2013

and in the period from 22 to 28 March 2025. Each participant was required to log in to the questionnaire using an institutional student e-mail account. At the beginning of the survey, respondents were informed that the questionnaire contained sensitive content. They were also asked to declare that they were not victims of sexual violence, were not currently undergoing sex therapy, and did not have sexual dysfunctions that might affect their responses. Participants were additionally provided with a brief presentation of Józef Tischner and an explanation of the context of the title, including clarification that the questions were asked in the context of gender rather than sexual intercourse.

The questionnaire consisted of 6 questions. The first 5 questions concerned the assessment of sex on a 6-point scale from 0 to 5 (higher values meant a higher rating). The sixth question was an open-ended question about what sex is for the respondents. The questionnaire also contained data on the age and gender of the respondents.

Quantitative variables are described using the arithmetic mean, standard deviation (SD), median, and minimum and maximum values.

Nonparametric tests were used to check the significance of differences in the level of discrete variables: Mann-Whitney *U* test – in two groups (unrelated samples); ANOVA Friedman test – in at least three groups (linked samples). To check exactly which pairs of groups have significant differences as a post-hoc test, the Dunn-Bonferroni test was used.

The value of $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant. Statistical calculations were performed using the Statistica 10 PL statistical package.

Results

2013 results

The study involved 209 people, including 157 (75.1%) women and 52 (24.9%) men (Table 1).

The age of the respondents ranged from 13 to 64 years. The average age of the respondents was 24.8 ± 4.8 years. Half of the subjects were under 24 years of age and half were over 24 years of age (median = 24.0 years). The average age of women was 24.8 ± 4.0 years and the average age of men was 25.0 ± 6.7 years (Table 2).

Sex rating

Among all respondents, the ANOVA Friedman test showed a significant difference between opinions on

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of respondents’ age

Sex	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max
Women	157	24.8	4.0	24.0	17	42
Men	52	25.0	6.7	24.0	13	64
Total	209	24.8	4.8	24.0	13	64

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of opinions on what sex is for respondents and the result of the ANOVA Friedman test

Total – Sex is...	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.	χ^2	P-value
Mood	209	2.81	1.63	3.0	0	5	208.03	< 0.0001
Emotional experience	209	4.43	0.85	5.0	0	5		
Personal encounter	209	4.32	0.91	5.0	0	5		
Corporeality	209	4.24	1.12	5.0	0	5		
Responsibility	209	3.76	1.48	4.0	0	5		

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$, χ^2 – the value of the chi-squared statistic, p – the level of probability.

Table 4. Probability levels p the result of the Dunn-Bonferroni test for opinions on what sex is for respondents

Total – Sex is...	Mood	Emotional experience	Personal encounter	Corporeality
Emotional experience	< 0.0001			
Personal encounter	< 0.0001	1.0000		
Corporeality	< 0.0001	1.0000	1.0000	
Responsibility	< 0.0001	0.0003	0.0442	0.0346

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of opinions on what sex in women is and the result of the ANOVA Friedman test

Women – Sex is...	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.	χ^2	P-value
Mood	157	2.87	1.63	3.0	0	5	151.13	< 0.0001
Emotional experience	157	4.44	0.88	5.0	0	5		
Personal encounter	157	4.32	0.93	5.0	0	5		
Corporeality	157	4.26	1.12	5.0	0	5		
Responsibility	157	3.88	1.44	4.0	0	5		

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

what sex is ($p < 0.0001$). The average was the highest for the “Sex is an experience” statement and the lowest for the “Sex is a mood” statement (Table 3).

The Dunn-Bonferroni test showed significant differences between statements on what sex is (Table 4):

- mood and emotional experience ($p < 0.0001$) – “Sex is an emotional experience” was rated higher,
- mood and personal encounter ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- mood and corporeality ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher,
- mood and responsibility ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is responsibility” higher,
- emotional experience and responsibility ($p = 0.0003$) – respondents rated “Sex is an emotional experience” higher,
- personal encounter and responsibility ($p = 0.0442$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- corporeality and responsibility ($p = 0.0346$) – respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher.

Among women, the ANOVA Friedman test showed a significant difference between statements on what sex is ($p < 0.0001$). The average was the highest for

the “Sex is an experience” statement and the lowest for the “Sex is a mood” statement (Table 5).

The Dunn-Bonferroni test showed significant differences between statements on what sex is (Table 6):

- mood and emotional experience ($p < 0.0001$) – “Sex is an emotional experience” was rated higher,
- mood and personal encounter ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- mood and corporeality ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher,
- mood and responsibility ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is responsibility” higher,
- emotional experience and responsibility ($p = 0.0190$) – respondents rated “Sex is an emotional experience” higher.

Among men, the ANOVA Friedman test showed a significant difference between statements on what sex is ($p < 0.0001$). The average was the highest for the “Sex is an experience” statement and the lowest for the “Sex is a mood” statement (Table 7).

The Dunn-Bonferroni test showed significant differences between statements on what sex is (Table 8):

- mood and emotional experience ($p < 0.0001$) – “Sex is an experience” was rated higher,

Table 6. Dunn-Bonferroni Test probability levels for sex scores in women

Women – Sex is...	Mood	Emotional experience	Personal encounter	Corporeality
Emotional experience	< 0.0001			
Personal encounter	< 0.0001	1.0000		
Corporeality	< 0.0001	1.0000	1.0000	
Responsibility	< 0.0001	0.0190	0.6096	0.4964

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of opinions on what sex in men is and the result of the ANOVA Friedman test

Men –Sex is...	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.	χ^2	P-value
Mood	52	2.63	1.66	3.0	0	5	58.92	< 0.0001
Emotional experience	52	4.38	0.77	5.0	2	5		
Personal encounter	52	4.33	0.86	5.0	2	5		
Corporeality	52	4.19	1.12	5.0	0	5		
Responsibility	52	3.40	1.56	4.0	0	5		

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 8. Dunn-Bonferroni Test probability levels for sex scores in men

Men –Sex is...	Mood	Emotional experience	Personal encounter	Corporeality
Emotional experience	< 0.0001			
Personal encounter	< 0.0001	1.0000		
Corporeality	< 0.0001	1.0000	1.0000	
Responsibility	0.0636	0.0356	0.1311	0.1430

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 9. Means with standard deviations of opinions on what sex is in women and men and results of the Mann-Whitney U test

Sex is...	Sex				Z	P-value
	Woman N = 157		Man N = 52			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mood	2.87	1.63	2.63	1.66	0.86	0.3876
Emotional experience	4.44	0.88	4.38	0.77	0.83	0.4077
Personal encounter	4.32	0.93	4.33	0.86	0.10	0.9171
Corporeality	4.26	1.12	4.19	1.12	0.64	0.5238
Responsibility	3.88	1.44	3.40	1.56	2.08	0.0374

Z – the value of the Mann-Whitney U test, p – the level of probability.

- mood and personal encounter ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- mood and corporeality ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher,
- emotional experience and responsibility ($p = 0.0356$) – respondents rated “Sex is an emotional experience” higher.

Gender and statements on what sex is

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the sex score with the gender of the respondents. Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were shown only for the “Sex is responsibility” statement. However, the calculated probability level ($p = 0.0374$) is close

to the assumed significance level (0.05). Women rated the "Sex is responsibility" statement higher (Table 9).

2025 results

The study involved 109 people, including 78 (71.6%) women and 31 (28.4%) men (Table 10).

The age of the respondents ranged from 19 to 68 years. The mean age of the respondents was 28.7 ± 9.1 years (the mean age of women was 28.3 ± 8.9 years and of men 29.7 ± 9.8 years). Half of the people were no more than 25 years old (Table 11).

Statements on what sex is

Among respondents, the ANOVA Friedman test showed a significant difference between statements on what sex is ($p < 0.0001$). The average was the highest for the "Sex is a personal encounter" statement and the lowest for the "Sex is a mood" statement (Table 12).

The Dunn-Bonferroni test showed significant differences between statements on what sex is (Table 13):
 – mood and emotional experience ($p < 0.0001$) – "Sex is an emotional experience" was rated higher,
 – mood and personal encounter ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated "Sex is a personal encounter" higher,

Table 10. Number and frequency of respondents by gender

Sex	N	%
Woman	78	71.6
Man	31	28.4
Total	109	100.0

- mood and corporeality ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated "Sex is corporeality" higher,
- mood and responsibility ($p = 0.0470$) – respondents rated "Sex is responsibility" higher,
- emotional experience and responsibility ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated "Sex is an emotional experience" higher,
- personal encounter and responsibility ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated "Sex is a personal encounter" higher,
- corporeality and responsibility ($p = 0.0002$) – respondents rated "Sex is corporeality" higher.

Among women, the ANOVA Friedman test showed a significant difference between statements on what sex is ($p < 0.0001$). The average was the highest for the "Sex is an experience" and "Sex is a personal encounter" statements, and the lowest for the "Sex is a mood" statement (Table 14).

Table 11. Descriptive statistics of the age of respondents

Sex	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.
Woman	78	28.3	8.9	24.0	19	68
Man	31	29.7	9.8	27.0	20	65
Total	109	28.7	9.1	25.0	19	68

Table 12. Descriptive statistics of opinions on what sex is for respondents and the result of the ANOVA Friedman test

Total – Sex is...	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.	χ^2	P-value
Mood	109	2.72	1.81	3.0	0	5	163.71	< 0.0001
Emotional experience	109	4.58	0.87	5.0	0	5		
Personal encounter	109	4.63	0.77	5.0	0	5		
Corporeality	109	4.45	0.84	5.0	2	5		
Responsibility	109	3.53	1.54	4.0	0	5		

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$. χ^2 – the value of the chi-squared statistic, p – the level of probability.

Table 13. Probability levels p the result of the Dunn-Bonferroni test for opinions on what sex is for respondents

Total – Sex is...	Mood	Emotional experience	Personal encounter	Corporeality
Emotional experience	< 0.0001			
Personal encounter	< 0.0001	1.0000		
Corporeality	< 0.0001	1.0000	1.0000	
Responsibility	0.0470	< 0.0001	< 0.0001	0.0002

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 14. Descriptive statistics of opinions on what sex in women is and the result of the ANOVA Friedman test

Women – Sex is...	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.	χ^2	P-value
Mood	78	2.71	1.71	3.0	0	5	110.19	< 0.0001
Emotional experience	78	4.58	0.88	5.0	0	5		
Personal encounter	78	4.58	0.86	5.0	0	5		
Corporeality	78	4.38	0.87	5.0	2	5		
Responsibility	78	3.68	1.37	4.0	0	5		

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 15. Dunn-Bonferroni Test probability levels for sex scores in women

Sex is...	Mood	Emotional experience	Personal encounter	Corporeality
Emotional experience	< 0.0001			
Personal encounter	< 0.0001	1.0000		
Corporeality	< 0.0001	1.0000	1.0000	
Responsibility	0.0305	0.0005	0.0006	0.0281

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 16. Descriptive statistics of opinions on what sex in men is and the result of the ANOVA Friedman test

Men – Sex is...	N	Mean	SD	Median	Min.	Max.	χ^2	P-value
Mood	31	2.74	2.07	3.0	0	5	57.15	< 0.0001
Emotional experience	31	4.58	0.89	5.0	1	5		
Personal encounter	31	4.77	0.43	5.0	4	5		
Corporeality	31	4.61	0.76	5.0	2	5		
Responsibility	31	3.16	1.88	4.0	0	5		

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 17. Probability levels of the Dunn-Bonferroni test score for respondents' sex ratings

Men – Sex is...	Mood	Emotional experience	Personal encounter	Corporeality
Emotional experience	0.0005			
Personal encounter	0.0001	1.0000		
Corporeality	0.0007	1.0000	1.0000	
Responsibility	1.0000	0.0055	0.0014	0.0074

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

The Dunn-Bonferroni test showed significant differences between statements on what sex is (Table 15):

- mood and emotional experience ($p < 0.0001$) – “Sex is an emotional experience” was rated higher,
- mood and personal encounter ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- mood and corporeality ($p < 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher,
- mood and responsibility ($p = 0.0305$) – respondents rated “Sex is responsibility” higher,
- emotional experience and responsibility ($p = 0.0005$)

- respondents rated “Sex is an emotional experience” higher,
- personal encounter and responsibility ($p = 0.0006$)
- respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- emotional experience and corporeality ($p = 0.0281$)
- respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher.

Among men, the ANOVA Friedman test showed a significant difference between statements on what sex is ($p < 0.0001$). The average was the highest for the “Sex is a personal encounter” statement

Table 18. Means with standard deviations of opinions on what sex is in women and men and results of the Mann-Whitney *U* test

Sex is...	Sex				Z	P-value
	Woman N = 78		Man N = 31			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mood	2.71	1.71	2.74	2.07	−0.42	0.6758
Emotional experience	4.58	0.88	4.58	0.89	−0.17	0.8637
Personal encounter	4.58	0.86	4.77	0.43	−0.87	0.3863
Corporeality	4.38	0.87	4.61	0.76	−1.38	0.1675
Responsibility	3.68	1.37	3.16	1.88	1.06	0.2878

Z – the value of the Mann-Whitney *U* test, *p* – the level of probability.

Table 19. Means with standard deviations of opinions on what sex is in respondents in different time periods (2013 and 2025) and the results of the Mann-Whitney test

Total – Sex is...	Year				Z	P-value
	2013 N = 209		2025 N = 109			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mood	2.81	1.63	2.72	1.81	0.32	0.7497
Emotional experience	4.43	0.85	4.58	0.87	−2.28	0.0226
Personal encounter	4.32	0.91	4.63	0.77	−3.57	0.0004
Corporeality	4.24	1.12	4.45	0.84	−1.21	0.2264
Responsibility	3.76	1.48	3.53	1.54	1.40	0.1608

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$ is marked in red.

and the lowest for the “Sex is a mood” statement (Table 16).

The Dunn-Bonferroni test showed significant differences between statements on what sex is (Table 17):

- mood and emotional experience ($p = 0.0005$) – “Sex is an experience” was rated higher,
- mood and personal encounter ($p = 0.0001$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- mood and corporeality ($p = 0.0007$) – respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher,
- emotional experience and responsibility ($p = 0.0055$) – respondents rated “Sex is an emotional experience” higher,
- personal encounter and responsibility ($p = 0.0014$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher,
- emotional experience and corporeality ($p = 0.0074$) – respondents rated “Sex is corporeality” higher.

Gender and statements on what sex is

The Mann-Whitney *U* test did not show a significant difference for any statement on what sex is between women and men ($p > 0.05$) (Table 18).

Comparison of statements on the nature of sex over time

Total

Among respondents, the Mann-Whitney *U* test showed significant differences in statements (Table 19):

- emotional experience ($p = 0.0226$) – respondents rated “Sex is an emotional experience” higher in 2025,
- personal encounter ($p = 0.0004$) – respondents rated “Sex is a personal encounter” higher in 2025.

Women

Among women, the Mann-Whitney *U* test showed a significant difference only for the “personal encounter” statement ($p = 0.0087$). Women rated the “Sex is a personal encounter” statement higher in 2025 (Table 20).

Men

Among men, the Mann-Whitney *U* test showed a significant difference only for the “personal encounter” statement ($p = 0.0121$). Men rated the “Sex is a personal encounter” statement higher in 2025 (Table 21).

Table 20. Means with standard deviations of opinions on what sex is in women over different periods of time and the results of the Mann-Whitney test

Women – Sex is...	Year				Z	P-value
	2013 N = 157		2025 N = 2025			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mood	2.87	1.63	2.71	1.71	0.73	0.4662
Emotional experience	4.44	0.88	4.58	0.88	−1.65	0.0980
Personal encounter	4.32	0.93	4.58	0.86	−2.62	0.0087
Corporeality	4.26	1.12	4.38	1.87	−0.28	0.7817
Responsibility	3.88	1.44	3.68	1.37	1.43	0.1523

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

Table 21. Means with standard deviations of opinions on what sex is in men in different periods of time and the results of the Mann-Whitney test (2013 and 2025)

Men – Sex is...	Year				Z	P-value
	2013 N = 52		2025 N = 31			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Mood	2.63	1.66	2.74	2.07	−0.49	0.6248
Emotional experience	4.38	0.77	4.58	0.89	−1.66	0.0960
Personal encounter	4.33	0.86	4.77	0.43	−2.51	0.0121
Corporeality	4.19	1.12	4.61	0.76	−1.89	0.0583
Responsibility	3.40	1.56	3.16	1.88	0.37	0.7090

A statistically significant $p < 0.05$.

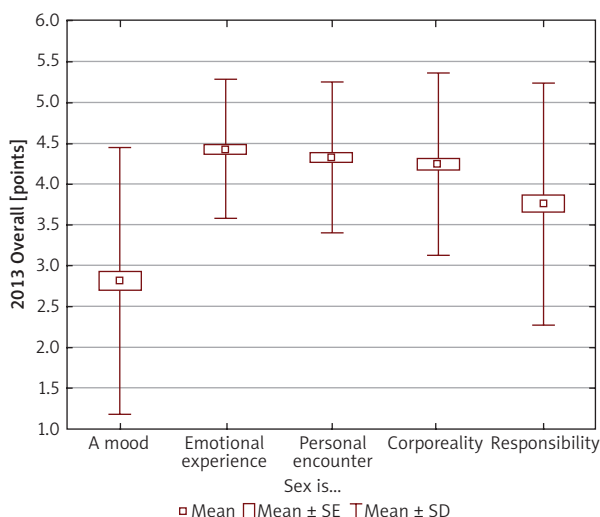


Figure 1. Distribution of respondent's opinions to statement about the nature of sex

Result

Conclusions

In 2025, respondents associated sex with responsibility to a lesser extent ($M = 3.76$ in 2013 vs. $M = 3.53$ in

2025), but women were statistically significantly more likely to understand the role of responsibility than men ($p < 0.05$, $M = 3.16$ for men vs. $M = 3.68$ for women). Women surveyed in 2025 were less likely than men to view sex as an experience ($M = 4.58$ for women and $M = 4.77$ for men) and corporeality ($M = 4.38$ for women and $M = 4.61$ for men), but these differences were not statistically significant. Men in 2025 attributed higher importance to sex in all aspects (experience, corporeality, mood) than in 2013, with the exception of responsibility ($M = 3.16$ in 2025 and $M = 3.40$ in 2013) for experience, this difference was statistically significant. The responses of women in 2025 were similar (for experience, the difference was significantly higher in 2025) to the 2013 responses, but also in this group the importance of responsibility decreased, but this difference was not statistically significant ($M = 3.68$ in 2025 and $M = 3.88$ in 2013).

Respondents of both genders were significantly more likely than in the survey from 12 years ago to rate sex as an emotional experience and personal encounter. In view of the decreasing awareness of the sense of responsibility in sexual relationships, it is also worth pointing out the importance of shaping the sense of responsibility in sexual relationships in gynecological contexts (Figures 1–11).

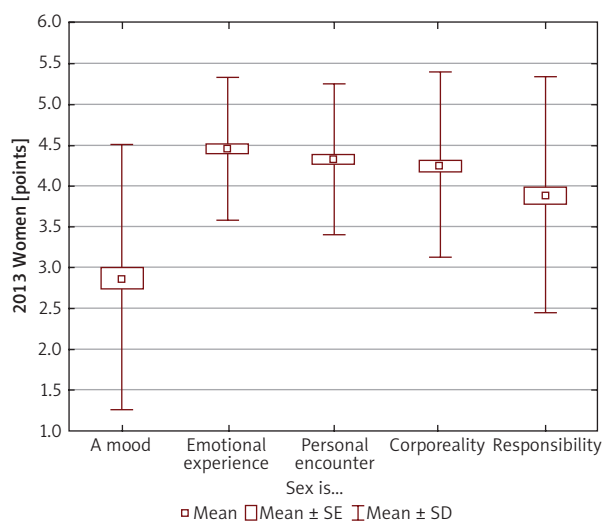


Figure 2. Distribution of women's opinions to statements about the nature of sex

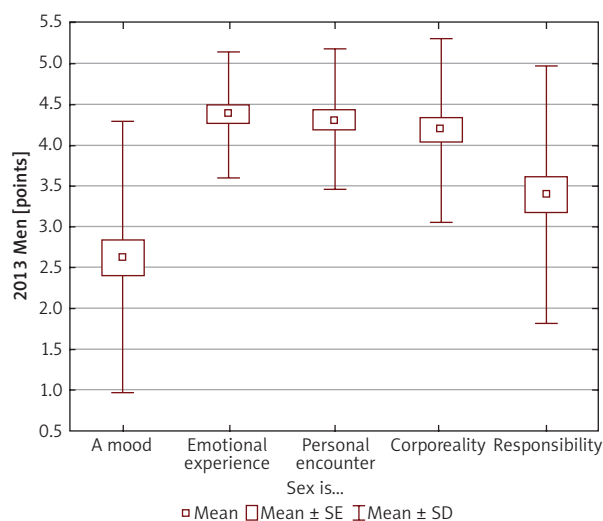


Figure 3. Distribution of men's responses to statements about the nature of sex

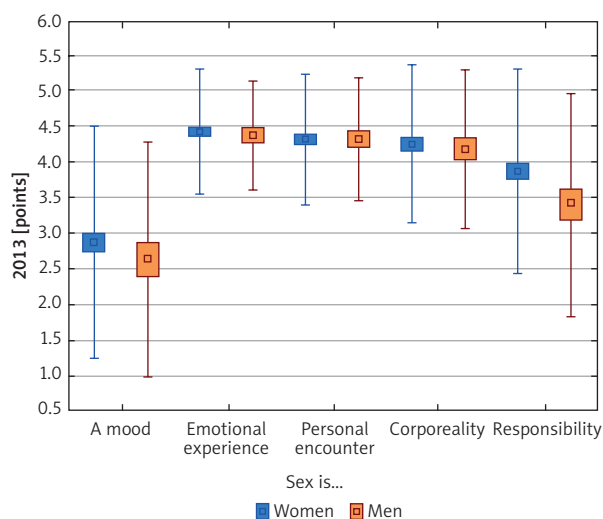


Figure 4. Distribution of men's and women's responses to statements about the nature of sex

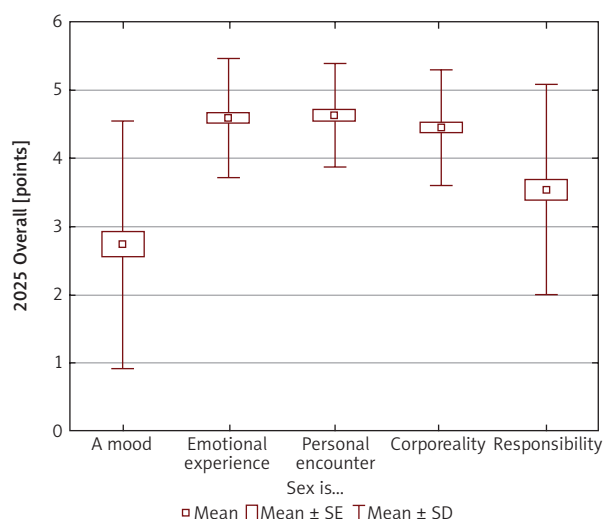


Figure 5. Distribution of respondent's opinions to statements about the nature of sex

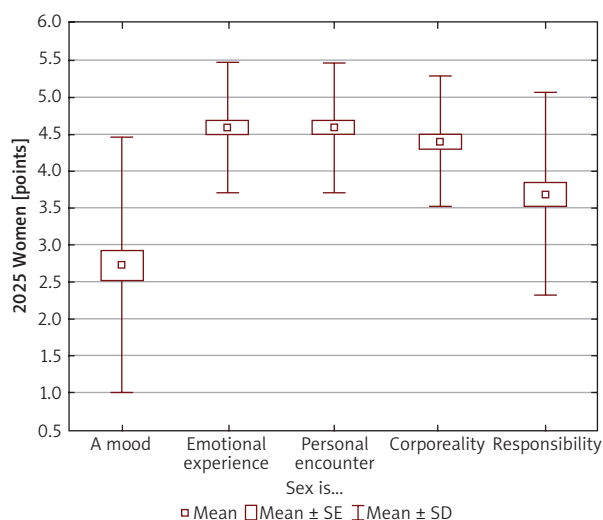


Figure 6. Distribution of women's responses to statements about the nature of sex

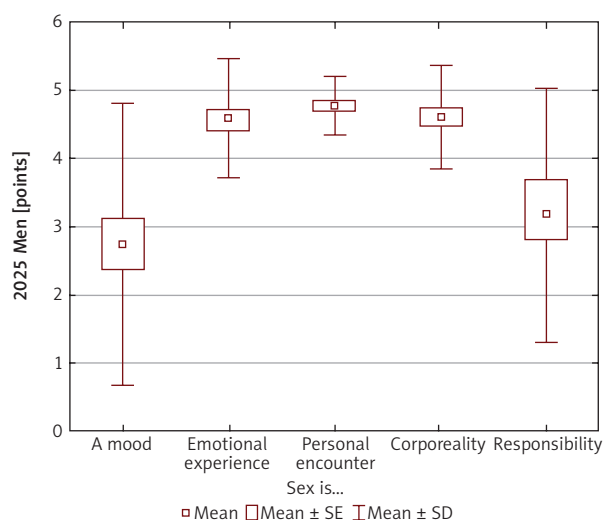


Figure 7. Distribution of men's responses to statements about the nature of sex

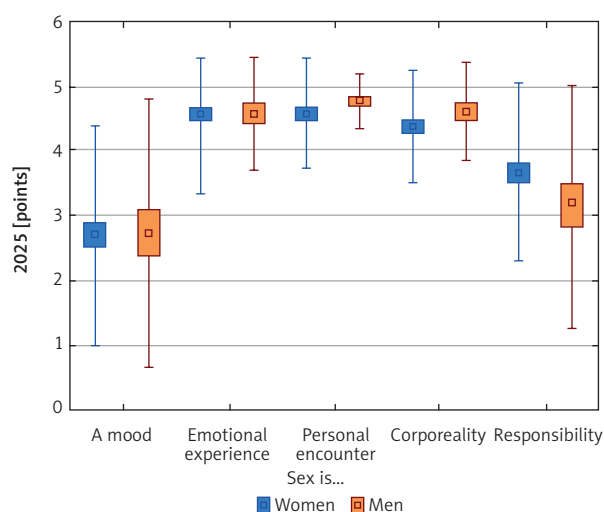


Figure 8. Distribution of men's and women's responses to statements about the nature of sex

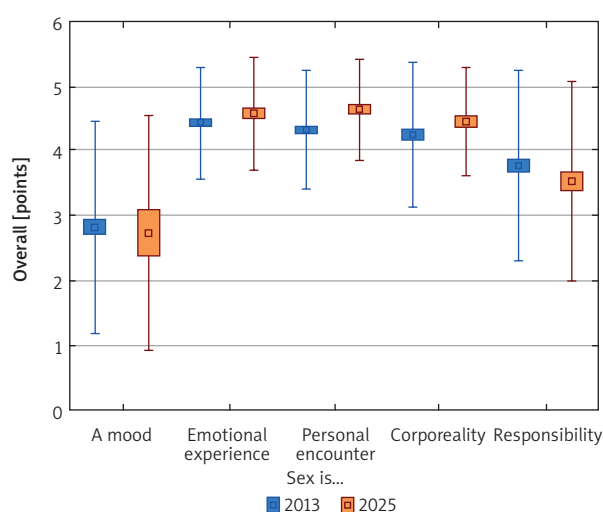


Figure 9. Distribution of responses to statements about the nature of sex over time (comparison of 2013 and 2025)

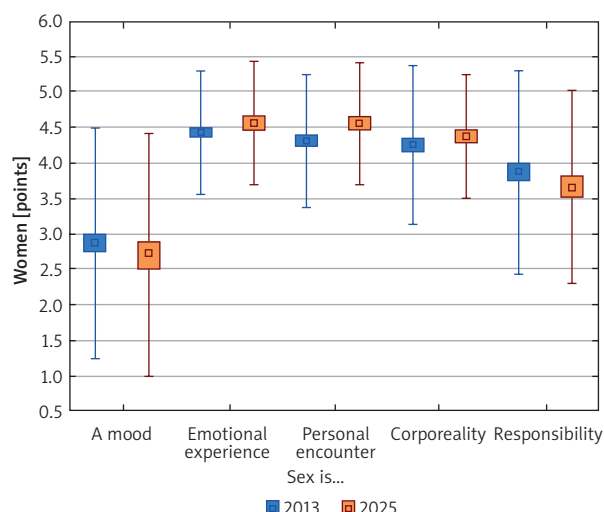


Figure 10. Distribution of women's responses to statements about the nature of sex in different period of time (2013 and 2025)

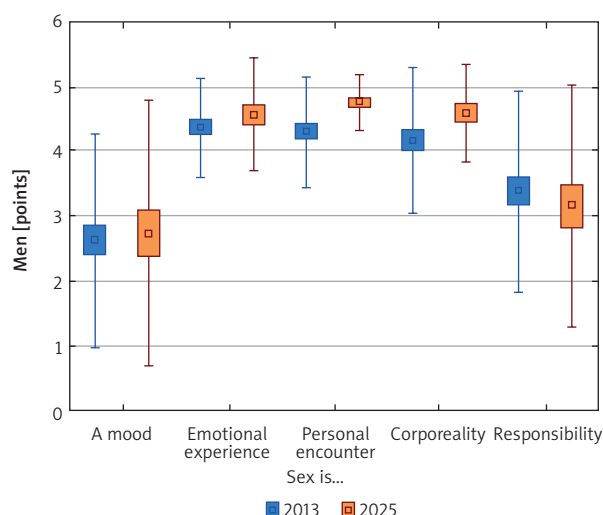


Figure 11. Distribution of men's responses to statements about the nature of sex in different period of time (2013 and 2025)

Research on the actual ethos in the field of sexual morality is important, both from the point of view of normatively understood sexual ethics, as well as sexology and gynecology. Lack of a sense of responsibility in sexual life with a low level of health and sexuality education results in early sexual initiation, frequent change of sexual partners, and these are factors that increase the risk of unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Responsibility in sexual relations includes responsibility for oneself, for one's partner, as well as for possible offspring.

Discussion

Gender issues have always been one of the issues that have always required a special, professional, in-

terdisciplinary, and at the same time empathetic – sensitivity and delicacy approach. Issues related to gender in the medical aspect are particularly dealt with by sexology. From a medical point of view, the lack of a sense of responsibility in sexual life with a low level of pro-health and sexuality education results in early sexual initiation and frequent change of sexual partners. As we know, these are factors that increase the risk of unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including oncogenic serotypes of HPV viruses important for the development of cervical cancer, HIV and other venereal diseases [3–5].

At the same time, there is an important psychological, social and legal aspect here, because the lack of responsibility in the sexual sphere results in real

life dramas, family and social problems combined with emotional stress, which in the case of pregnancy (in this case unplanned pregnancy) also has a bad effect on the development of the fetus. Responsibility in sexual relations includes, first of all, responsibility for oneself, for one's partner, as well as for possible offspring that may be the fruit of intercourse [3, 5].

Sexology is a relatively young branch of science, the development of which was particularly intensive in the second half of the twentieth century. It deals with the effects of the division of people into two genders: female and male, in the sphere of human development and health, the harmony of their coexistence with other people and the creation of interpersonal bonds. Sexology is grounded in significantly developed theoretical framework and research methodology. Nowadays, a number of sexological issues are analyzed from a historical perspective, taking into account the epoch, religion, culture, and living conditions of the society whose sexuality is being considered [3, 5].

From the medical point of view, this interdisciplinarity consists in combining the physiological and pathological aspects of various medical disciplines, such as psychiatry, endocrinology, neurology, and especially gynecology and obstetrics, which are directly concerned with sexually transmitted infections, reproductive health disorders, fertility problems, pregnancy-related complications, and the health of both the woman and the developing fetus. It is important to take into account the complexity of the determinants governing functioning in the sexual sphere, both medical and humanistic issues are important here, and the considered issue according to the thought of Józef Tischner is one of them. Like any human behavior, sexual behavior is subject to ethical evaluation. In order to ensure the healthy development of the sexuality of human individuals and societies, all populations must recognize, promote, respect and defend sexual rights by all available means [3, 6, 7].

Since health is a fundamental human right, a person's sexual health must be a fundamental right. According to the WHO, sexual health thrives properly in an environment that recognizes, respects and exercises the following sexual rights: the right to sexual freedom, the right to sexual distinctiveness, sexual autonomy, sexual integrity, and safety of the sexual body, the right to sexual privacy, the right to sexual equity, the right to sexual pleasure, the right to emotional sexual expression, the right to sexually associate freely, the right to make free and responsible reproductive choices, the right to sexual information based on scientific research, the right to comprehensive sexuality education, the right to sexual health care [8, 9].

Sexuality results from the interactions that take place between the individual and his/her social structure. The full development of sexuality is necessary to achieve well-being in the individual, interpersonal and social dimensions [8, 9].

It is worth adding that apart from medical norms related to functioning in the sexual sphere, legal norms are also of great importance. Criminal law provisions relating to the sphere of sexual life are primarily aimed at protecting the highest human value, which is the individual freedom, both in the sense of defense against external violence and in the sense of the fundamental right to privacy, to freely shape one's intimate sexual life, provided that this does not cause harm to another individual and does not objectively harm real social interests. "Lewd acts should be defined all acts of sexual expression that are objectively capable of interfering with the proper physical and mental development of a minor in the sphere of sexuality" [4, 6, 10, 11].

From the beginning of civilization, sexuality has been subject to moral and legal regulation.

The wording of the principles regulating human sexuality vary depending on the era, cultural level, geographical and climatic conditions, as well as on the living conditions of a given society. In the oldest civilizations, the state imposed legal regulation of sexual life and was focused on marriage and family. Sexual behavior is still regulated by law. It contains provisions that prohibit certain sexual acts under the threat of criminal sanctions. In different countries, the same act can be interpreted differently. An example may be sexual intercourse with a minor or engaging in any other sexual activity, or inducing him or her to submit to such activities or to perform them [11, 12].

In Poland, the legislator, in order to protect people who are not mentally and physically mature for sexual initiation, has set an age limit below which it is illegal to engage in sexual activity with these persons. In Poland, the age limit has been set at 15 years. In the event of breaking the law, there is a penalty of imprisonment from 2 to 12 years. Worldwide, the legal age for sexual activity is on average 15–18 years. In some regions, however, this age is 9–21 years. There are countries where sexual activity outside of marriage is prohibited. Breaking the law has different consequences: from liability for a minor offense to liability for rape. In conclusion, many factors can influence judicial decisions in cases related to sexual activities, so it is important to pay attention not only to medical norms, but also to the cultural and legal conditions functioning in a given country [4, 10, 12].

Sexual rights are universal human rights, based on the inalienable freedom, dignity and equality of all humans. In considering sexual rights, one must know and relate to the principles of personalistic sexual ethics. The psychological view of human sexuality focuses mainly on explaining the role of emotions and feelings in creating and directing people's sexual behavior. Sexuality is one of the basic dimension of human life – it fulfills a procreative, hedonistic, bond-forming function, and also creates an integral component of personality. It is an indicator of good

physical and mental condition and overall activity of the body [4, 6].

It is worth emphasizing in the context of the problem under consideration that sexology is a science dealing with the emotional and sexual life of a person and the formation and development of interpersonal bonds. It is indeed an interdisciplinary science, capturing human sexuality in psychological, sociological, pedagogical, ethical and moral, legal, ethnographic, anthropological, biological, religious and medical aspects. Sexology deals with all the consequences resulting from the division of people into two genders. Sexology is also inextricably linked to sexual ethics – both in the normative and descriptive aspects [5, 6].

Normative (prescriptive) ethics in the classical tradition is the branch of philosophy that deals with what is considered acceptable in human behavior, what is good or bad, right or wrong in the human pursuit of goals. Sexual ethics in this perspective is understood as a set of norms and moral assessments in the field of sexology, which a given group of people considers appropriate in a specific behavior; these are views that are considered to be in accordance with the conscience of a human being, with individual principles and views of the world. The concept of sexual ethics has often changed its scope – what was once considered sexually unethical today often becomes acceptable. It seems that only the Catholic Church invariably guards its principles of sexual ethics. However, it should be emphasized at this point that in specific issues concerning gender and reproduction, some issues have changed over the course of history – e.g. the matter of the natural family planning; formerly unacceptable, and today considered the only acceptable method. It is also necessary to distinguish descriptive ethics, ethology, which is an attempt to describe and explain – in the mainly psychological and sociological aspect – the actual moral ethos functioning in a specific place and time [13, 14].

Every discipline of knowledge, in order to develop and function properly, must adhere to scientific standards. It is necessary to do research showing the regularities and changes that occur in a given field. In sexology, sexual ethics and sexuality education, research is particularly necessary, and scientific discussion should verify views. Research on the actual ethos in the field of sexual morality is significant both from the point of view of sexology and normatively understood sexual ethics.

The study, conducted by the authors of this paper, indicates that all people participating in the study rated the statement “sex is an emotional experience” the highest – an average score of 4.4 ± 0.9 . Respondents rated the “sex is a mood” statement the lowest – an average score of 2.8 ± 1.6 . Therefore, for most respondents sex is not primarily associated with responsibility, and thus in the strict sense, morality becomes secondary.

Responsibility appears to be one of the most fundamental values in sexual ethics, which was already pointed out by Karol Wojtyła in the title of his study in this field (“Love and Responsibility”). The score of sex was compared with the gender of the respondents. The median score of sex ratings in women and men is at a similar level [15]. Statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were shown only for “sex is a certain type of responsibility that a person brings with him/her into the world”. However, the calculated probability level ($p = 0.037417$) is close to the assumed significance level (0.05).

Sexuality of a human being is one of his or her basic goods – it makes a person physically, mentally and spiritually capable of creating marriage and family, having a natural right to do so. In the medical (sexology) as well as philosophical, ethical, psychological, sociological, pedagogical and legal aspects, human sexuality, marriage and family, have been the goal of aspirations, sacrifices, also the care of humanity and reflection for its understanding and verbalization since the earliest times. Sexuality of a person is closely related to his or her natural environment, culture, and spiritual expectations. The human environment is a relatively stable system of elements of the human environment, important for his life and behavior.

Józef Tischner's philosophy of love encompasses broad dimensions of love, including the love of a man for a woman. Sexual differentiation introduces, into the world of love, a very important category, namely otherness. The differentiation of the sexes leaves its mark on all aspects of personal existence, which in love creates a specific dialectic of opposites striving toward unity: “Unity is the goal of striving. It is a special goal, a goal present in almost every encounter, and at the same time one that can never be fully attained”. For Tischner, the love between a man and a woman is above all a matter of choice. He viewed the tradition of the romantic paradigm of love critically, writing: “Love is therefore not a mood, ecstasy, or joy, as we understand it today under the influence of the Romantics. Love is an act of decision, of choice, of acknowledging someone as ‘one's own’”. In Tischner's thought, the component of hedonic ecstasy gives way to the ethical attitude of responsibility, understood as a consequence of the act of decision and of choosing this particular person as “one's own” [16, 17]. Certain intuitions about love developed by Karol Wojtyła, as well as his concept of the theology of the body elaborated during his papal pontificate, may be regarded as a complement to and development of the intuitions contained in Tischner's writings – hence their presence in the present work.

According to John Paul II: “Experiencing the human body in all the truth about its masculinity and femininity should correspond to the dignity of its body and its importance in building the communion of persons. It can be said that this is one of the basic

dimensions of human culture, understood as an ennobling affirmation of what human is". Concern for the sexual sphere of man, marriage and family is expressed in constantly improved and precise legal regulations, aimed at organizing all the issues related to it. Karol Wojtyła points out that in connection with the progress of medicine, numerous moral issues arise in the area of sexual life [18, 19]. Bishop Andreas Laun said that "twenty centuries of Christianity have not contributed as much to the understanding of sexuality as twenty years of his pontificate". Referring to the theology of the body, presented by John Paul II in a series of lectures given during Wednesday audiences, the papal biographer George Weigel described it as a "theological time bomb" which, when it explodes, will bring a real breakthrough not only in the teaching of the Church, but in the whole of contemporary thought. In terms of gender issues, relations between people are regulated by principles, i.e. moral norms and biological norms, as two fundamental forces [20].

The aforementioned stigmatization of the sphere of sex, often in the history of mankind, brought the effect in the form of guilt and focused the interest of ethics on a small area of sexual behavior – morality became identical with sexual morality. Karol Wojtyła emphasizes that sex is a gift from God. In the light of Gen 2:23-25, the human body is the body in its original masculinity and femininity, it is not only the source of fertility or procreation in the mystery of creation, but there is also a nuptial feature emphasized in it "from the beginning": it is capable of expressing such a love in which man-person becomes a gift and thus fulfills the true meaning of his existence. However, a fundamental question arises: how to live while having a soul and a body at the same time, a body endowed with sexual characteristics? How do we reconcile these two different dimensions of human existence, which so often seem to contradict each other? These questions posed by a man are made clear by Yves Semen in his book "Sexuality according to John Paul II". These questions permeate the history of all cultures over the centuries. A man is aware of the complexity of his bodily and spiritual nature, and he experiences this duality as discord – often an inner drama. The discrepancy between the corporeal and the spiritual is particularly strong in human sexuality, going beyond anthropology, psychology, touching on ethics and the fundamental theological question [20].

Man as a species is sexually diverse, which has very serious consequences in many areas of his existence. Being a man and being a woman brings with it certain tasks, responsibility, openness to other people. Guided by the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity, of love and solidarity, it appears necessary for the man to develop fully and to carry out his proper mission.

The perception of sexual ethics is largely determined by the religious system of values. It is worth

emphasizing, however, that Karol Wojtyła pointed out that numerous moral issues arise in the area of sexual life and this happens in connection with the progress of medicine [18–21].

The decisions made by a person regarding his or her own corporeality can to a large extent determine his or her further life, and sometimes even the course of history. These decisions are largely a consequence of environmental influences, educational influences during the period of psychosexual development. During puberty, shaping their own psyche and soma. A young person faces the difficult task of defining his or her own identity. The "raging hormones" cause the explosion of the first sexual desires, needs and expectations. Young people also realize that they are also the object of similar feelings of their peers. At this time, a person is faced with the need to make a decision to start sexual activities or to postpone it. However, this decision must be conscious and voluntary. It should result from one's own belief and willingness. Such a situation ensures the harmonious further development of the man. Human sexuality is both the physiological and psychological basis for the ability to love [10, 12].

When considering sexuality and its place in human life, it should be recognized that sexuality is like a language that needs to be learned. Importantly, this learning takes place at its own pace, different for different people.

Changes in sexual morality take place along with transformations in the sphere of culture and social life. The world of values and culture expresses the aspirations and affirmations of modern man in the most perfect way. Culture as a product of human activity best testifies to the general condition of society, its development possibilities, and best reflects human anxieties, joys and aspirations.

A contemporary man, living in the era of the spread of the cult of corporeality, a consumerist attitude characterized by the desire to ensure comfort, a comfortable and rich life, caring only for material values, needs and seeks answers to the question of what is good and what is evil, seeks and needs lasting values, and values related to sexual ethics are of particular importance here.

Karol Wojtyła emphasized that the point of view of sexual ethics should be personalistic – it cannot be different: it concerns the matters of persons – and the matters of love between a man and a woman, not only in the aspect of the body and gender. In this view, love can only be a part of persons – matters of the body and sex participate in it by submitting to the rules that set the framework of the order that should prevail in the world of persons. Therefore, sexual ethics cannot be sexology in its view of a woman and a man and of love, which pose the whole problem solely or primarily from the point of view of the body and sex [19, 20].

The knowledge of a sexologist can contribute a lot to a detailed understanding of the principles of sexual ethics. These principles are essential in learning about sexology as a science of gender – about the gender of a given person.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Address for correspondence

Agata Puszcz
Clinic of Gynecology
Poznan University of Medical Sciences
Poznan, Poland
E-mail: agata.puszcz@yahoo.com

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