GLOBAL V TABOO TRACKER 2020







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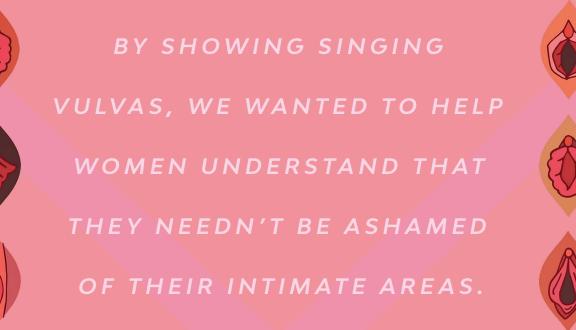


We are committed to creating a world where women can live the life they want by breaking the taboos that can hold them back.

But we know this is no small task, discrimination in our societies is endemic and embedded.

We won't stop until taboos have been challenged, understood and accepted by society.





BY SHOWING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES, WE WANTED TO GIVE A VOICE TO THE UNSEEN, UNSPOKEN AND UNKNOWN TRUTHS ABOUT WOMEN'S BODIES.



We've created the **Global V Taboo Tracker** to help women break free from the V-Zone* discrimination that can bring shame, pressure and embarrassment to their daily lives.

We are listening to the experiences of taboos to drive institutional change across the world, tracking and representing their experiences in an open and honest way, enabling cultural changes.

The *Global V Taboo Tracker* is a long-term commitment that will inform, inspire and help positively impact the conversation around women's V-Zone.

* The V-Zone is what we use to describe the vagina and vulva and the V-shaped front you can see. Everything inside your pants, that's the V-zone.



METHODOLOGY

Based on the strategic knowledge and framework developed by Kitchen8 to understand the nature of V-Zone taboos and how they affect women worldwide, Ketchum Analytics conducted an online survey among a total of 14,089 men and

women across seven markets: the U.K., France, Mexico, Argentina, Russia, China, and Malaysia.

The survey was fielded between January 15th, 2020 and January 23rd, 2020.

The margin of error at a 95% confidence level is +/- .83%.

BENCHMARKING

For this research we conducted secondary research and identified the benchmark at which a topic or action is generally considered a taboo is 20%, or one in five.

However, we understand that taboos do not always affect everyone in the same way.

For us, if even one woman feels stigma or shame towards an issue, that's one woman too many.

Our ambition is to shine a light on these important issues and to not stop until all taboos have been tackled.





While **66%** of women say that periods are being portrayed in adverts in a more normalised way, they are just as likely as men to hold taboos surrounding menstruation.

Moreover, **a third** of women and men both believe vaginal discharge is gross and further perpetuate taboos surrounding women's intimate area.

THE TOP TABOOS THAT MEN & WOMEN EQUALLY PERPETUATE:

WOMEN SHOULDN'T HAVE SEX DURING **THEIR PERIOD BECUASE IT'S UNHYGENIC**

54% OF WOMEN AGREE

52% OF MEN AGREE

NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree

- **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?
- Q: Indicate your level of agreement regarding current efforts in your country to improve perceptions of women's intimate areas?

33% OF WOMEN AGREE





BASE: **All women:** n = 7,055 **All men:** n = 7,034

In an ideal world, women and men would both abandon societal conventions about womanhood.

However, there are instances where women continue to perpetuate taboos against themselves.

Although women hold these taboos, men continue to perpetuate the stigma.

THE TOP TABOOS THAT WOMEN ARE FUELING:

OF WOMEN AGREE

54%

THAT WOMEN SHOULDN'T HAVE SEX DURING THEIR PERIOD BECAUSE IT'S UNHYGIENIC

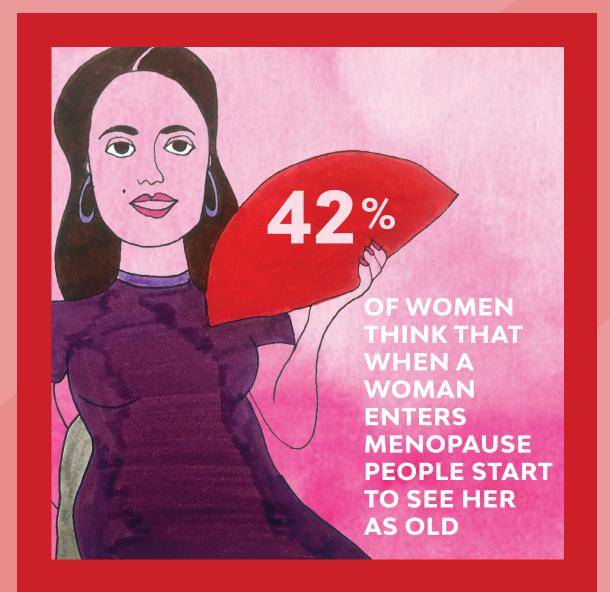
NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?



OF WOMEN AGREE

THAT WOMEN SHOULDN'T HAVE SEX **DURING THEIR PERIOD** BECAUSE IT'S GROSS



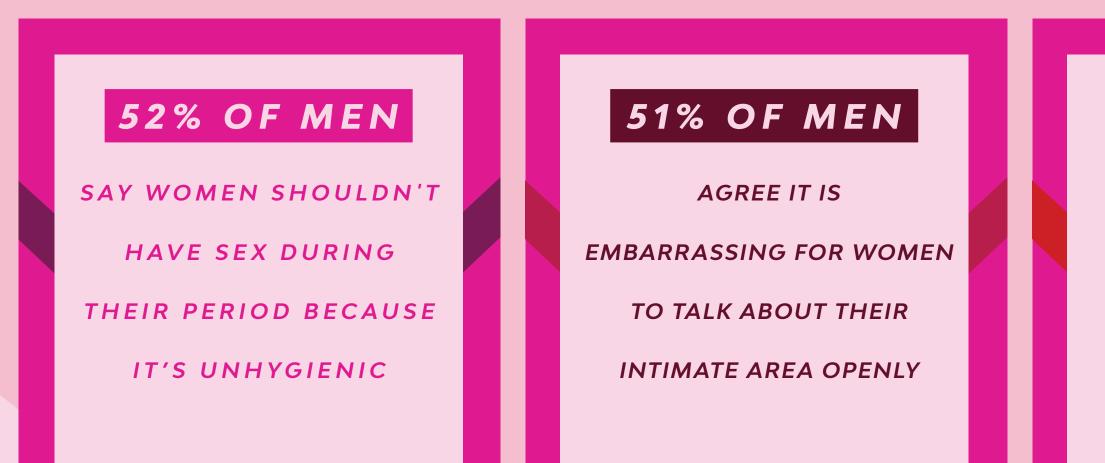


BASE: All women: n=7,055

In an ideal world, women and men would both abandon societal conventions about womanhood.

There are several instances where men hold these stigmatizing views, with menstruation featured in three of the top five taboos men perpetuate against women.

THE TOP TABOOS THAT MEN ARE FUELING:



AGREE IT IS EMBARRASSING

FOR WOMEN TO

TALK ABOUT THEIR

NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?

43% OF MEN

AGREE THAT WOMEN SHOULDN'T HAVE SEX DURING THEIR PERIOD **BECAUSE IT'S GROSS**

51% OF MEN

MENSTRUATION OPENLY

32% OF MEN

AGREE IF A WOMAN HAS AN ABORTION, SHE SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF HERSELF





Women's intimate area causes the most shame and embarrassment for women.

One in two women find the subject embarrassing to discuss, with **one in five** women reporting feelings of shame attached to their intimate area.



say it is embarrassing for a woman to talk openly about her intimate area

NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree Q: To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?

THE TOP TABOOS AMONG WOMEN RELATED TO THEIR INTIMATE AREA:



OF WOMEN

say they have felt the need to apologise for the way their intimate area looks or smells when being with a partner



say they have been shamed by their partner for the way their intimate area looks or smells







A QUARTER OF WOMEN SAY THEY HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED THEIR INTIMATE AREA OR SEXUAL PLEASURE WITH ANYONE

There are some areas of a woman's physical and emotional wellbeing that she doesn't share with anyone.

A *quarter* of women have never discussed their own sexual pleasure and intimate area, more so than money/salary.

NOTES:

Q: Which of these have you ever discussed with...

BASE: All women: <u>n = 7,055</u> GENDER IDENTITY

IDENTITY

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39%

38%

26%

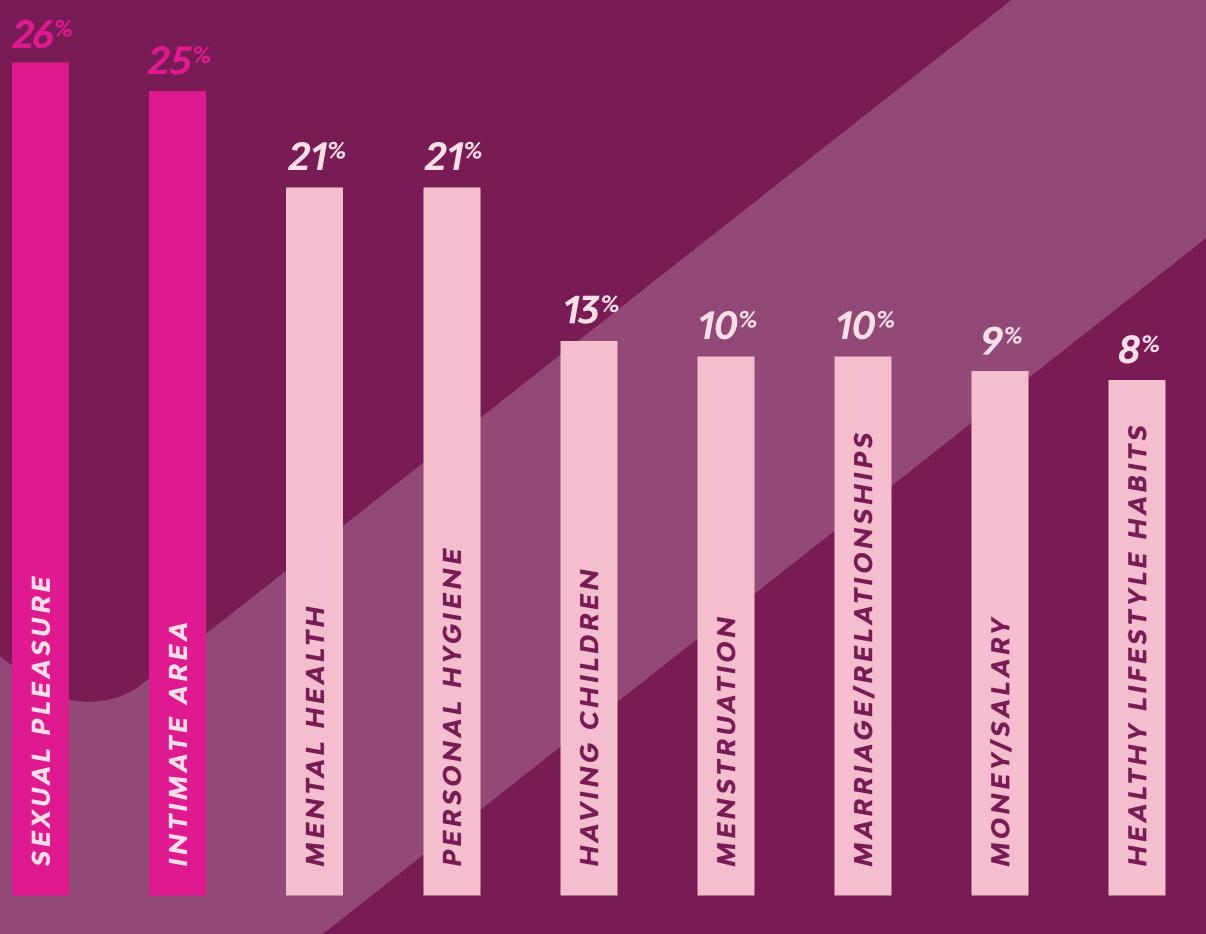
EQUALITY

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THE TOPICS **WOMEN** SAY THEY HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE





OVER A THIRD OF MEN HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED **MENSTRUATION WITH** ANYONE, MORE THAN THEIR **OWN MENTAL HEALTH**

There are some topics men do not share with anyone.

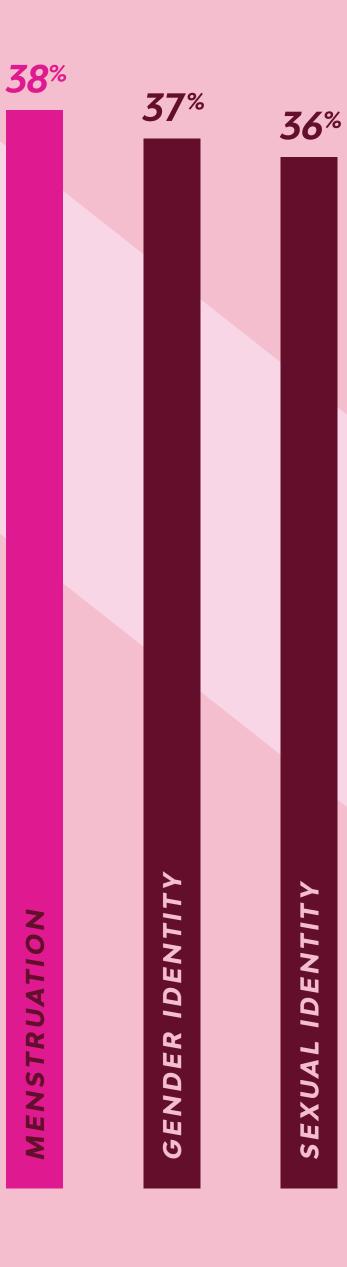
Over a *third* of men have never discussed menstruation with anyone, even more so than their mental health or having children.

NOTES:

Q: Which of these have you ever discussed with..

BASE:

All men: n = 7,034

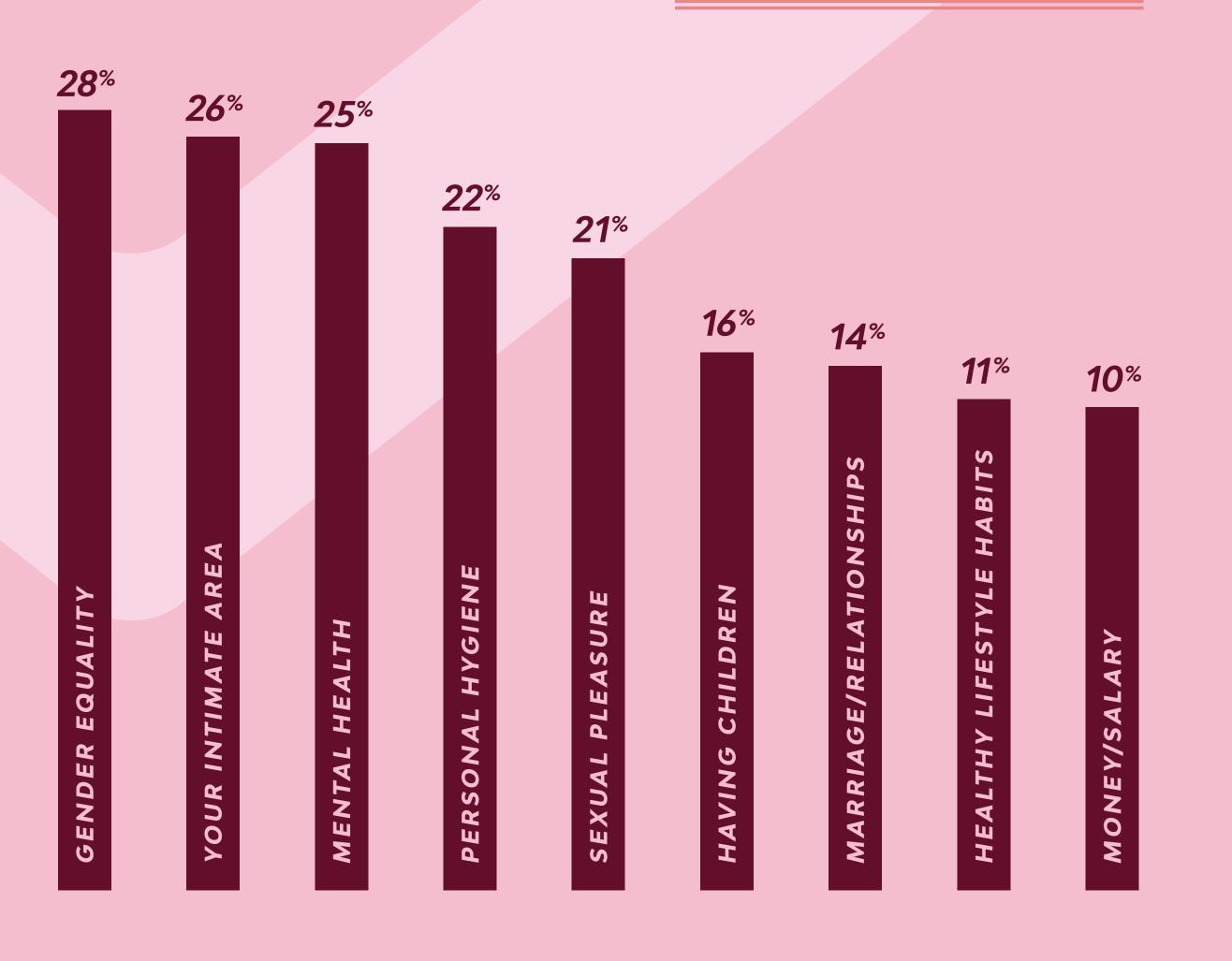


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THE TOPICS MEN SAY THEY HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE





Despite most women and men saying that women should feel comfortable discussing period pain with others, this topic remains so taboo that only **two in** five women say they have discussed menstruation with their partner.

Likewise, only 43% of women say they have talked about their intimate area with their partner and only 56% have discussed sexual pleasure with their partner.

ATTITUDES TO PERIOD PAIN: 87% OF WOMEN 71% OF WOMEN & 77% OF MEN **& 59% OF MEN** AGREE THAT WOMEN SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING TO OTHERS ABOUT HOW PAINFUL THEIR PERIOD IS

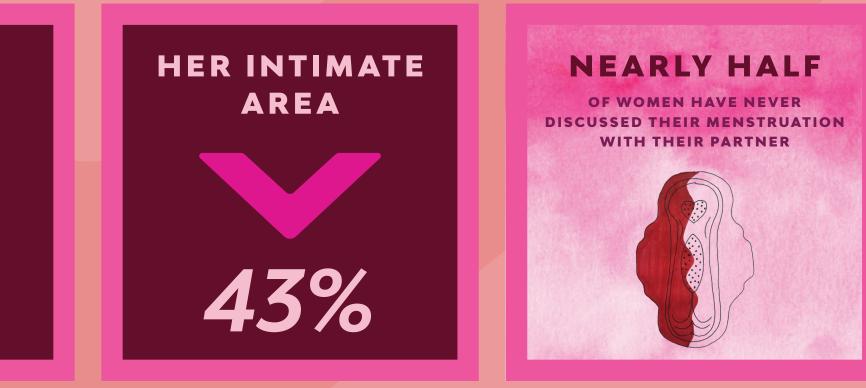


NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?

AGREE THAT WOMEN SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE GOING TO THEIR DOCTOR IF THEIR PERIOD PAIN BECOMES UNBEARABLE

KEY TOPICS WOMEN SAY THEY HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THEIR PARTNER/SPOUSE:





BASE: All women: n = 7,055 **All men:** n = 7,034 Taboos around menopause and ageing are present globally.

Compared to men, women more often show more positive attitudes towards older women.

However, women also perpetuate menopause and ageing taboos as they are more likely than men to believe society sees those who have entered menopause as old.

TWO-FIFTHS OF WOMEN BELIEVE THAT SOCIETY SEES WOMEN WHO HAVE ENTERED MENOPAUSE AS OLD

IF A WOMAN IS **EXPERIENCING MENOPAUSE**, SHE HAS LOST HER FEMININITY

75% **OF WOMEN** DISAGREE

61% OF MEN DISAGREE

NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?

OLDER WOMEN SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING **ABOUT THEIR PERIODS** OR MENOPAUSE

71% **OF WOMEN AGREE**

57% OF MEN AGREE

WHEN A WOMAN ENTERS MENOPAUSE, **PEOPLE START TO** SEE HER AS OLD

42% OF WOMEN AGREE

35% OF MEN AGREE



BASE: All women: n = 7,055 **All men:** n =7,034

Globally, women face taboos every day.

However, the current landscape showcases areas of hope and progress as women are embracing themselves and their bodies as well as seeing periods being portrayed in adverts in a more normalised way.

WOMEN SHOULD NOT FEEL ASHAMED FOR WANTING TO EXPERIENCE PLEASURE DURING SEXUAL INTERCOURSE



PORTRAYED IN

PERIODS ARE BEING ADVERTS IN A MORE NORMALISED WAY



NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree

Q: To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?

Q: Are attitudes about women's intimate areas becoming more or less

Q: Indicate your level of agreement regarding current efforts in your

GLOBAL V TABOO TRACKER



WOMEN'S EQUALITY HAS COME MORE INTO FOCUS CULTURALLY

70% **OF WOMEN AGREE**



ATTITUDES TO WOMEN'S INTIMATE AREAS ARE **BECOMING MORE POSITIVE** IN YOUR COUNTRY





BASE:

All women: n = 7,055

MARKET COMPARISONS

TABOOS SURROUNDING PERIODS PERSIST GLOBALLY

Latin American markets and portions of European markets are more likely to hold taboos regarding period pain, while Asian markets are more likely to hold prejudice toward period sex, deeming it unhygienic.

52% GLOBALLY

SAY THAT PERIOD PAIN IS JUST SOMETHING WOMEN HAVE TO DEAL WITH

۲ 51% 60% OF MEXICANS **OF RUSSIANS** AGREE AGREE *** **58%** 47%

> **OF ARGENTINES** AGREE

NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree

- Q: To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?
- **Q:** Are attitudes about women's intimate areas becoming more or less positive in your country?
- **Q:** Indicate your level of agreement regarding current efforts in your country to improve perceptions of women's intimate areas?

BASE:

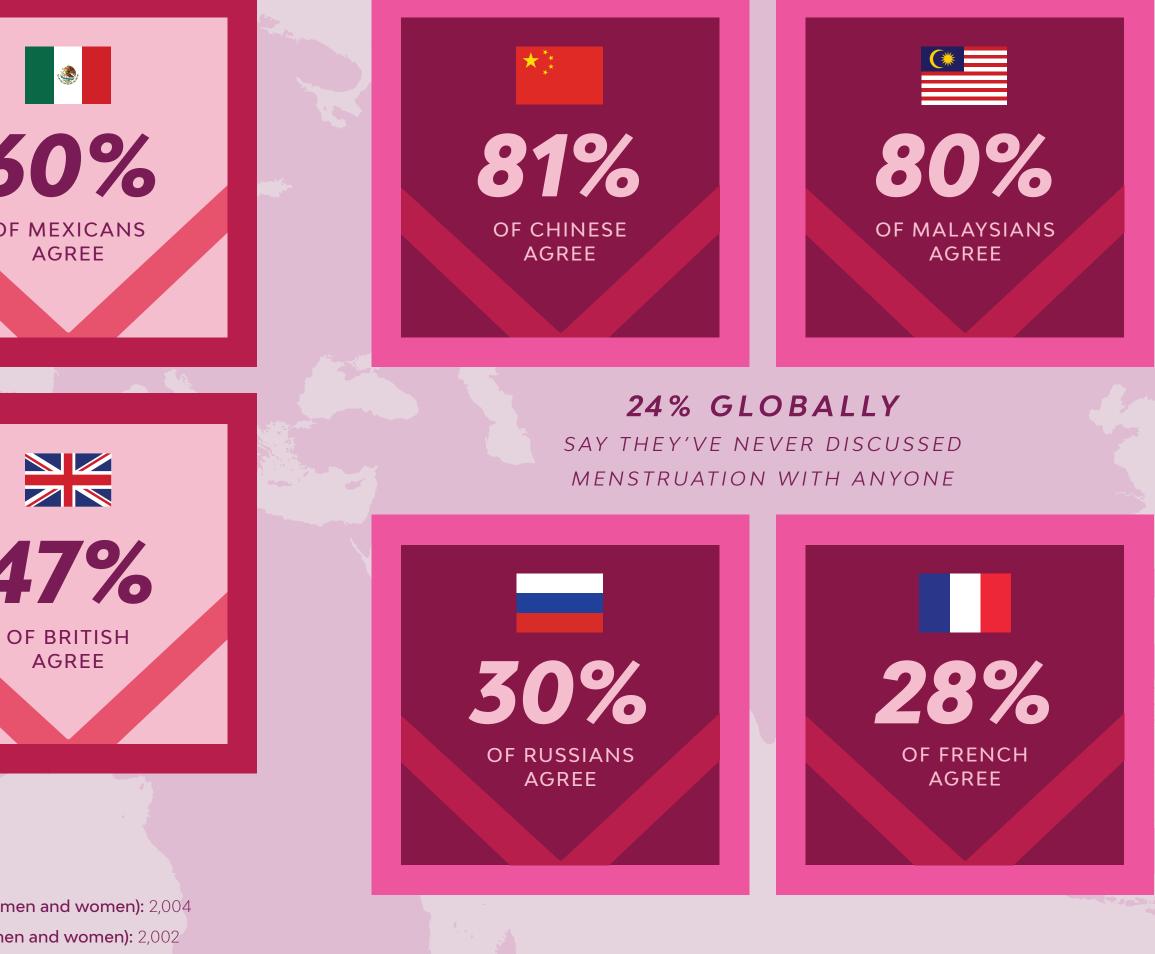
lotal (men and women): n = 14,089 Total Argentina (men and women): 2,017 Total China (men and women): 2,002 Total France (men and women): 2,006

Total Malaysia (men and women): 2,004 Total Mexico (men and women): 2,002 Total UK (men and women): 2,003 Total Russia (men and women): 2,055

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THEIR PERIOD BECAUSE IT'S UNHYGIENIC

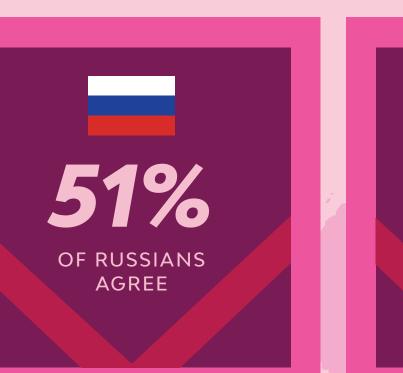




A REGIONAL DIVIDE EXISTS RELATED TO AGEING AND MENOPAUSE TABOOS

Latin American markets and the UK are more accepting of older women speaking openly about their period or menopause.







Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree

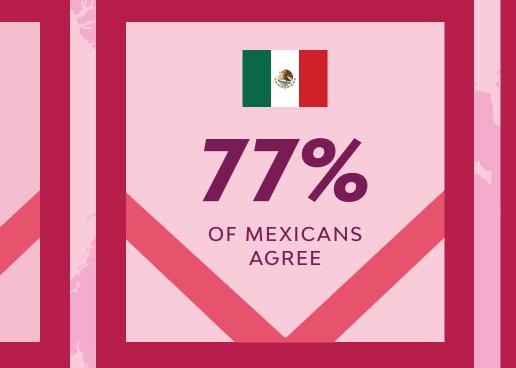
Q: To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?

BASE:

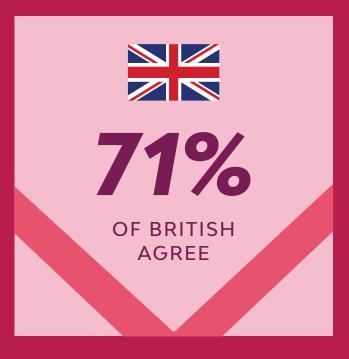
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GLOBAL V TABOO TRACKER



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64% GLOBALLY AGREE THAT OLDER WOMEN SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT THEIR PERIODS OR MENOPAUSE





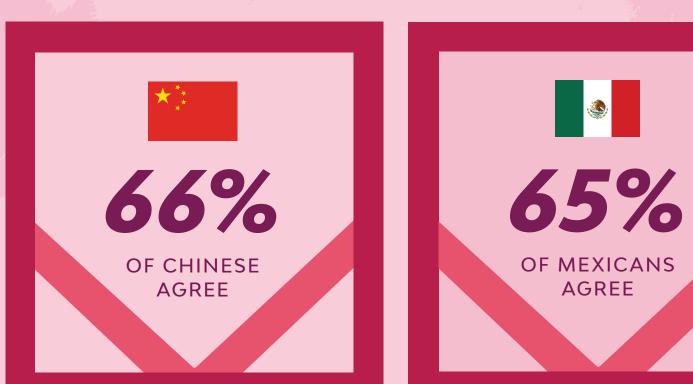


SHAME AND SILENCE DRIVE VULVA AND VAGINA TABOOS

European markets keep silent about their intimate area while shame and prejudice is driven by Latin American and Asian markets.

51% GLOBALLY

GLOBALLY THAT IT IS EMBARRASSING FOR WOMEN TO TALK ABOUT THEIR INTIMATE AREA OPENLY



NOTES:

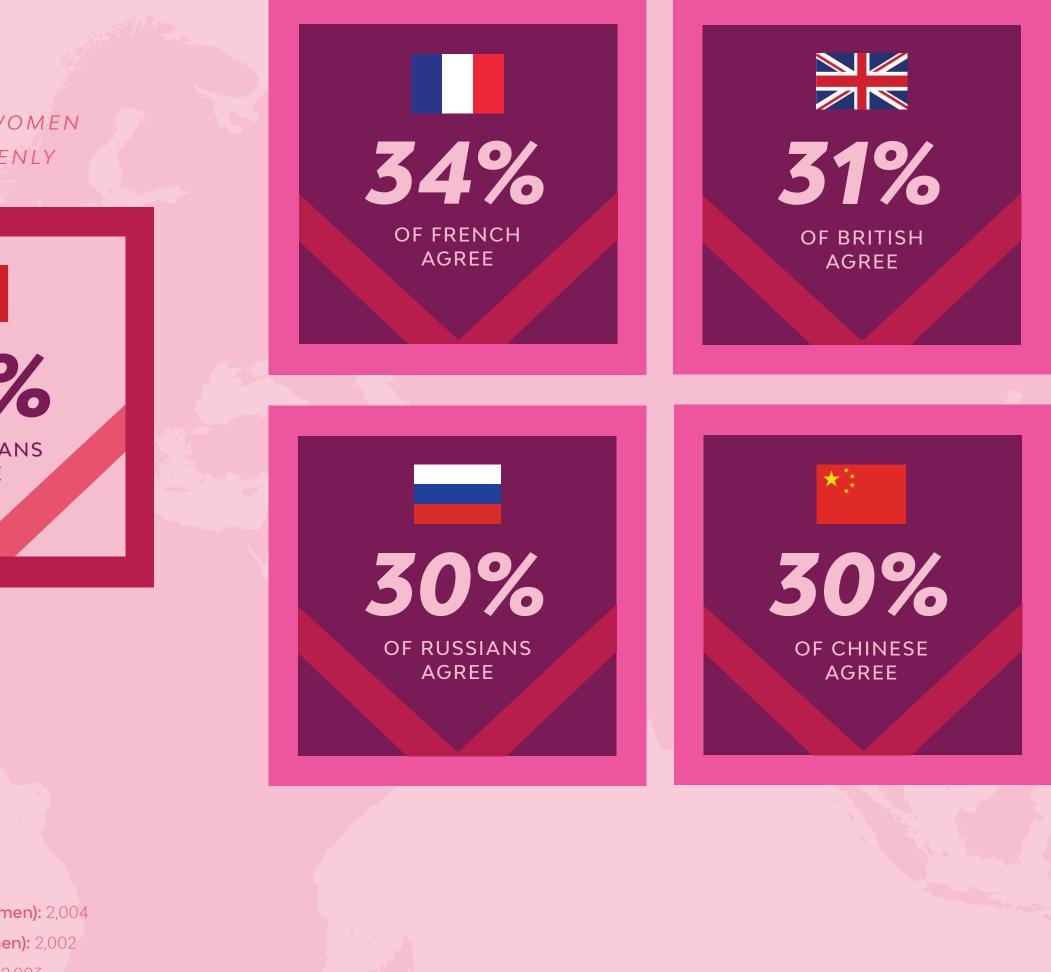
Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree

- **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?
- **Q:** Which of these have you ever discussed with...

BASE:

Total (men and women): n=14,089 Total Argentina (men and women): 2,017 Total China (men and women): 2,002 Total France (men and women): 2,006 Total Malaysia (men and women): 2,004 Total Mexico (men and women): 2,002 Total UK (men and women): 2,003 Total Russia (men and women): 2,055 GLOBAL V TABOO TRACKER

26% GLOBALLY SAY THAT THEY HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED THEIR INTIMATE AREA WITH ANYONE



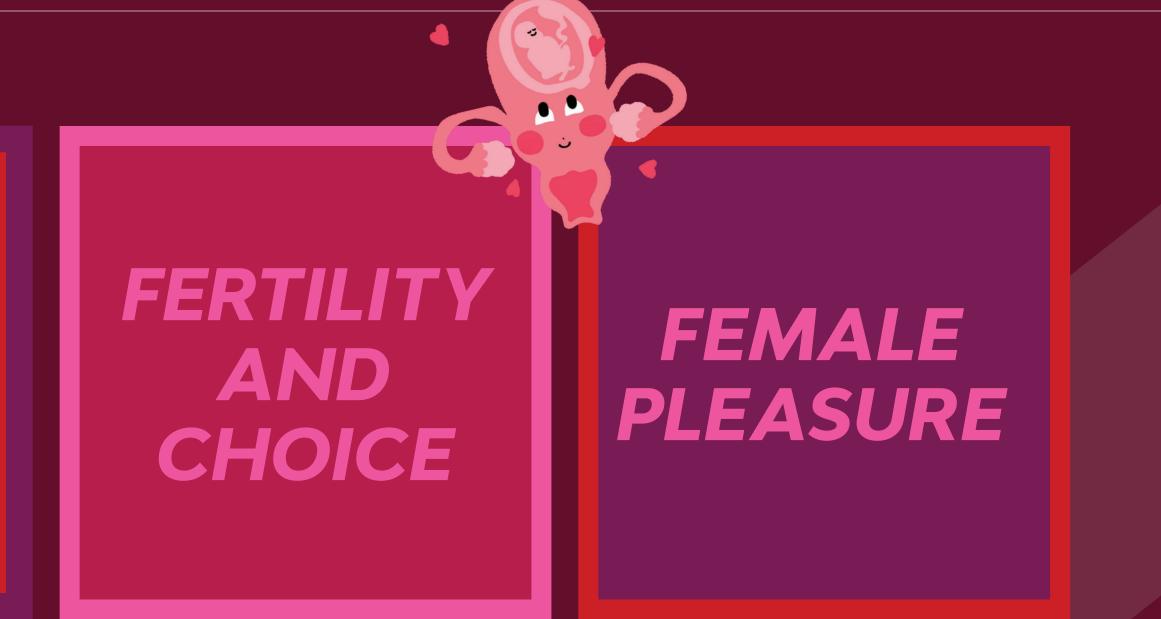


KEY TABOOS BY THEMES FROM THE GVTT

The Global V Taboo Tracker found *five* key topics that drove taboos surrounding the V-Zone.

PERIODS AND PERIOD PAIN

GLOBAL V TABOO TRACKER



VULVA AND VAGINA

AGEING AND **MENOPAUSE**



Although periods are a part of women's lived experience, only two in five women have discussed them with their partner.

Moreover, women experiencing period pain is an accepted reality for both women and men globally.

PERIODS

ONLY 40% OF WOMEN

HAVE DISCUSSED MENSTRUATION WITH THEIR PARTNER

. .

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NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree

- **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?
- **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements on period pain?
- Q: Indicate your level of agreement regarding current efforts in your country to improve perceptions of women's intimate areas?

2020

PERIOD PAIN

66% OF WOMEN

AGREE PERIODS ARE **BEING PORTRAYED IN** ADVERTS IN A MORE NORMALISED WAY



THINK THAT PERIOD PAIN IS JUST SOMETHING WOMEN HAVE TO DEAL WITH



THINK THAT WOMEN SHOULDN'T COMPLAIN ABOUT THE PAIN THEY EXPERIENCE **DURING THEIR PERIOD**

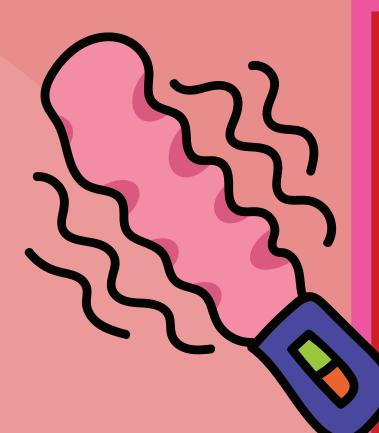


BASE: All women: n=7,055 **All men:** n = 7,034 Sexual pleasure is not widely discussed among women, even less so than salary.

Additionally, both men and women perpetuate taboos about period sex and lack of hygiene.



THINK WOMEN SHOULDN'T HAVE SEX DURING THEIR PERIOD AS IT'S UNHYGIENIC



OF WOMEN OF MEN

THINK THAT WOMEN WHO HAVE SEX ON THEIR PERIODS ARE LOOSE SEXUALLY

NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?

45% OF WOMEN OF MEN

THINK PERIOD SEX IS GROSS

21% OF MEN OF WOMEN HAVE NEVER DISCUSSED SEXUAL PLEASURE WITH

ANYONE

WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO DISCUSS THEIR SALARY

THAN THEIR SEXUAL PLEASURE

21% OF MEN

THINK THAT WOMEN WHO USE INTIMATE CARE PRODUCTS ARE LOOSE SEXUALLY

WITH FEMALE FRIEND(S)



BASE: All women: n = 7,055 **All men:** n = 7,034 Women not only keep silent about their intimate area, but also feel pressure to maintain a certain image of it.

50% OF MEN OF WOMEN

AGREE WOMEN HAVE TO WORK HARDER THAN MEN TO KEEP THEIR INTIMATE AREA LOOKING GOOD FOR THEIR PARTNER

51% OF WOMEN

FIND IT **EMBARRASSING TO** TALK OPENLY ABOUT THEIR INTIMATE AREA

ONLY

43%

OF WOMEN

HAVE DISCUSSED THEIR INTIMATE AREA WITH THEIR PARTNER

NOTES:

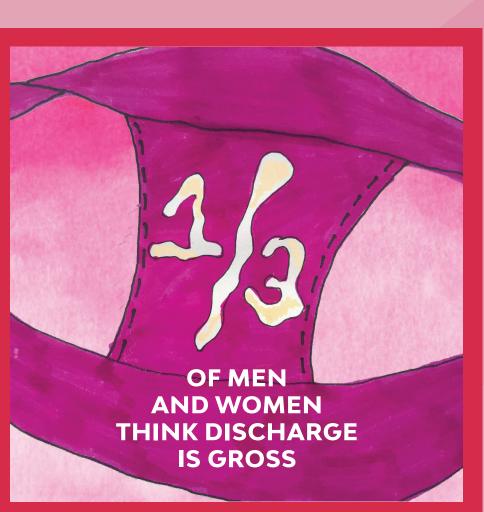
- Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree
- Q: To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements?
- **Q:** Which of these have you ever discussed with...





OF WOMEN

HAVE FELT THE NEED **TO APOLOGISE WITH** A PARTNER FOR HOW THEIR INTIMATE AREA LOOKS AND SMELLS



21% OF WOMEN

HAVE BEEN SHAMED BY THEIR PARTNER FOR HOW THEIR INTIMATE AREA LOOKS OR SMELLS

25%

OF WOMEN

OF WOMEN KEEP SILENT ABOUT THEIR INTIMATE AREA

> BASE: **All women:** n = 7,055 **All men:** n = 7,034



Men hold more traditional views on choice and abortion and further perpetuate taboos surrounding motherhood and fertility.

FERTILITY

26%

OF MEN

THINK THAT IF A WOMAN HAS HAD A MISCARRIAGE, SHE SHOULD NOT TELL ANYONE BEYOND HER PARTNER

26%

23% OF WOMEN

THINK THAT INFERTILITY SHOULD MAKE WOMEN FEEL LESS LIKE A WOMAN

NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree

Q: To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements on women's fertility?

CHOICE



OF MEN

THINK A WOMAN DECIDING NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN OF HER OWN IS ABNORMAL **30%** OF MEN



THINK DECIDING NOT TO HAVE KIDS IS SELFISH

25% of women

32% OF MEN

THINK THAT IF A WOMAN HAS AN ABORTION, SHE SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF HERSELF 19% ог women 26% ог мен

DON'T THINK WOMEN SHOULD BE ABLE TO DECIDE THEMSELVES IF THEY WANT TO TERMINATE THEIR OWN PREGNANCY

BASE: All women: n =7,055 All men: n =7,034



-

There is more global acceptance surrounding ageing and menopause taboos.

However, a large proportion of women still feel societal prejudice related to ageing and menopause.



NOTES:

Agree: % selecting somewhat or completely agree **Q:** To what extent do you personally agree with the following statements? OF WOMEN

WHEN A WOMAN ENTERS MENOPAUSE, PEOPLE START TO SEE HER AS "OLD"



BASE: All women: n =7,055 **All men:** n = 7,034





THANK YOU



