

HANS ROSLING: Welcome to the most exciting week of this course. I know that you have been waiting for it, because we are going to talk about sex and birth.

Throughout human history, sex and birth has being closely connected. In the past, when a woman started to have sexual intercourse, she would sooner or later give birth to a child. But for most people in the world, that has dramatically changed with the arrival of modern contraceptives and the access to safe abortions.

Today, the intimacy of sexuality can strengthen the relationship independently of when the couple want to have their babies. This was eloquently expressed already in the 1920s by Elise Ottesen-Jensen, the founder of the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education.

She said, "I dream of the day when every newborn child is welcome. When men and women are equal, and when sexuality is an expression of intimacy, joy, and tenderness." This week, we're going to tell you how far the world has come towards this noble goal.

In the first subsection, "Population," I start by explaining how fast population growth will come to end within this century. The reason being that already today, most women in the world have two babies.

In this second subsection, called "Maternal Health," we describe the main health risks during pregnancy, and which health service is needed to make childbirth safe. The risk of dying during pregnancy and childbirth has almost completely disappeared in the richest countries in the world. But in remote parts of the poorest countries, several percent of expecting women will either tragically die or suffer severe complications during pregnancy and childbirth. We will tell you what it takes to end that tragedy.

Finally, in the third subsection, called "Newborn Health," you will learn that throughout the human life, the highest risk of dying is on the first day of life. Fortunately, life of the newborn can be made safe with appropriate preventive and curative care. And you will learn how that can be made accessible throughout the world, even in countries at a very modest economic level.