

Wanted: Your Gynecologist

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There is a new women's magazine on sale at the Kurskaya metro station, and like all the others it has somebody pretty on the cover.

This cover features a handsome young man with steely blue eyes and a perfectly trimmed two-day old beard. He is lying on the ground with one arm behind his back and a come-hither look.

Resting upon his chin is the screaming headline, "Homosexuals: Why Are We Losing Them."

This is the world of Your Gynecologist, or YG, a new magazine that looks at women's — and sometimes men's — intimate health issues and that is now on sale in those clunky news boxes that could easily fit a small migrant inside to push out the magazines on offer. It's probably better than working for some building companies.

For 35 rubles (\$1.30), YG gives you a 15-page article on male homosexuality, touching on a dozen issues including that cover headline worry on why women are losing men to male love.

The article is not quite as crass as that sounds, although they do sound really worried, but using a picture of two carrots that have grown together so their lower parts wrap around each other in a tight orange hug is surely one of the odder decisions on illustrations in the history of gynecological-related publishing.

If the magazine inside is fairly sober — they even put a large letter “r” on articles that are paid for by sponsors — then the cover grabs you and shouts at you to take a look at your private bits more seriously.

There is unlikely to be a headline that will be thrown at Kurskaya metro commuters with more passion than “Varicocele: a Ball of Snakes in the Scrotum” or “What’s With the Mutiny in the Vagina!” this year.

Inside, the sub-editor who chose “Strangers Don’t Come Here” as a headline on a story about yeast infections should be named.

The person in charge of images has a noticeable love of metaphorical pictures. The snakes in the scrotum article is about a painful sounding version of varicose veins that was known memorably in the Middle Ages as a “tangle of snakes” and that is illustrated by photos of lots of snakes. No scrotums are in sight.

Another story has photos of eggs. Guess which sex that story is about.

Still, if you are expecting frank images that show our inner workings, then you have come to the right magazine. Go straight to Page 2, which has a full-page illustration of an important bodily part: the eye.

Perhaps previous magazines have dealt with the more traditional areas covered by gynecologists. The back page has another illustration, complete with the names of the 13 parts that form it. Yes, the ear.

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