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The movement is at www.embracingwomenshealth.com

FACT SHEET: GENDER HEALTH ISSUES
Mental Health; Heart Health; Diabetes; Asthma

GENDER ISSUES IN MENTAL HEALTH:

- Depression, anxiety and sleeping disorders all occur more frequently in women.
- Currently about seven million women in the United States are diagnosed with clinical depression; women are two times more likely than men to suffer from major depression.
- Women are twice as likely as men to experience some sort of specific phobia.
- By the age of 15, young women are twice as likely to have experienced a major depressive episode as their male counterparts. High school girls have significantly higher rates of depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and adjustment problems than high school boys.
- More girls attempt suicide than boys, but boys are more successful at completing the act than girls.
- Married women suffer from depression more often than married men, for whom married life seems to be a positive health benefit.
- Depressed women suffer heightened anxiety, or an unreasonable fear of ordinary events, while depressed men are more likely to drink excessively or to exhibit violent, abusive behavior.

GENDER ISSUES IN HEART HEALTH:

- Coronary artery disease (CAD), not breast cancer, is the leading cause of death in women over age 60.
- Thirty-five percent of women and 18 percent of men who have survived a heart attack will have another heart attack within six years.
- About 20 percent of heart attacks in women are characterized by pain in the upper abdomen and back instead of in the chest. This, together with a feeling of nausea, often results in a misdiagnosis of indigestion.
- Thirty-eight percent of women and 25 percent of men will die within one year of a recognized heart attack.
- Women who have had a heart attack and go back into an unhappy marriage after discharge from the hospital are 300% more likely to have another heart attack within the year. Men do not have the same vulnerability; an unhappy relationship doesn't impact their risk for a new attack.



FACT SHEET: GENDER HEALTH ISSUES, continued...

GENDER ISSUES IN DIABETES:

- Diabetes is one of the most serious health challenges facing women in the United States, especially minority women. Diabetic women have a worse prognosis than diabetic men after a heart attack.
- There is a decrease in sensitivity to insulin in some women at or near their menstrual period.
- The risk for cardiovascular disease, the most common complication attributable to diabetes, is more serious among women than men.
- The risk for diabetic ketoacidosis—diabetic coma—is 50 percent higher among women than men.
- The pregnant diabetic requires careful planning around several issues: meals, physical activity, frequency of blood glucose testing, timing and site of insulin injection, remedies for low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) stress reduction and coping with denial. Gestational diabetes predicts a higher risk for cardiovascular disease and Type II diabetes later in life.
- Diabetic women sometimes misuse insulin to control weight and omit doses to shed pounds. In one study, 90% of girls with Type I diabetes used insulin under dosing to avert weight gain. This was not true of diabetic boys.

GENDER ISSUES IN ASTHMA:

- Between the ages of 20 and 50, women outnumber men by three to one in asthma-related hospital admissions.
- Women are twice as likely as men to visit the emergency room due to asthma.
- The asthma death rate for women age 65 and older is more dramatic—99.1 per million, compared with 68.1 per million for men.
- In 2002, 11.6 million females had asthma, compared to 8.5 million males, and the rate in females was 30 percent greater than the rate in males.
- Females tend to have consistently higher asthma attack rates than males. In 2002, 7 million females had an asthma attack, compared to 4.9 million males.
- The asthma death rate for women is shown to be 42 percent higher than for men. Women account for 65 percent of all asthma deaths. African-American women have the highest death rate due to asthma.
- The Women and Asthma in America survey suggests that many women with asthma might not be adequately informed about their condition or the best ways to manage it.

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