

## *Gender Differences in Medical Treatment*

*“There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.” 1 Corinthians 12:5,6 NLT*

When diagnosed with the same illness, historically men and women were given the same prescriptions and procedures. Does that make sense? You know you are different and now, so do researchers, pharmaceutical companies, and physicians. In the last decade, they have begun to look at genetic differences between men and women and how those differences impact treatments and procedures. They have discovered that varying levels of estrogen and testosterone as well as differences in inherent risk-taking behavior impact the tendency for certain illnesses, levels of severity, and treatment of choice.

Genetics cause differences in body weight, organ size, and body fat which impact how medications are processed, what dosage is required, and how effective they are. Because of physical differences, women tend to require smaller doses than men. The level of sex hormones in men and women can impact a medication's effectiveness as well as the size of the liver or kidney that processes the medication. In both situations dosage adjustments may be required. For example some antibiotics tend to be more effective in women while anesthesia tends to be longer lasting in men. These differences can cause challenges for physicians looking for the right therapeutic dose.

Previous research was conducted on men while the newer studies are concentrating on women's health, risk factors, and treatment options. Results show that women have more headaches than men, delayed cardiac problems, higher risk for diabetes from smoking, and greater difficulty with breaking the smoking habit. The good news is that women tend to seek health care before men will – especially for mental illness.

Studies on the treatment of health issues in women continue. If you have a health concern, ask your physician about new options and recommendations for women. Examining female tendencies and risk factors may you help find your solution.

(Source: Society for Women's Health Research [www.womenshealthresearch.org/](http://www.womenshealthresearch.org/))

### *References / Resources*

[www.who.int/gender/documents/fact/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/gender/documents/fact/en/index.html) - World Health Organization has information on gender differences

<http://csd.georgetown.edu/why.htm> - Georgetown University's site for gender studies

[www.womenshealthresearch.org/site/PageServer](http://www.womenshealthresearch.org/site/PageServer) - Society for Women's Health Research has fact sheets on gender differences in specific illnesses – HON approved