

Heart disease and stroke in women

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of mortality worldwide in women, accounting for 35% of total deaths.

Coronary heart disease

- Coronary disease presents 10 years later in women than in men
- The symptoms can differ between women and men.
- In women, coronary disease is more likely to be due to coronary spasm or microvascular disease than is the case with men.

Risk factors for coronary heart disease

The risk factors for coronary heart disease include:

- Poor nutrition
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Hypertension
- Dyslipidemia
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Psychosocial stress
- Pregnancy-related disorders:
 - eclampsia
 - gestational diabetes
 - gestational hypertension
- Premature menopause
- Radiation for breast cancer

Stroke

- Stroke occurs at an older age in women than in men
- Women may have a worse prognosis than men
- 85% are ischemic
- 10% are due to intracerebral hemorrhage
- 5% are due to subarachnoid hemorrhage

Risk factors for stroke

The risk factors for stroke include:

- Hypertension
- Atrial fibrillation
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Physical inactivity

Cardiovascular disease in women remains under-studied, under-recognized, under-diagnosed and under-treated.

Further information

WHO. Cardiovascular diseases https://www.who.int/health-topics/cardiovascular-diseases#tab=tab_1

EMAS. The essential menopause curriculum for healthcare professionals <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.maturitas.2021.12.001>