

# FAST FACTS

## SEX AND GENDER IN MEDICAL RESEARCH

### GLOBALLY

While about one in five people who are diagnosed with lung cancer never smoked, nonsmoking women are three times more likely than nonsmoking men to get it. Despite this, researchers continually fail to analyze data by sex or include hormone status or other gender-specific factors in their research. This makes it difficult to uncover differences in incidence, prevalence, and survivability between men and women, or to replicate the studies.<sup>2</sup>

**MORE WOMEN DIE OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE** than men, yet only one-third of cardiovascular clinical trial subjects are female and fewer than one-third (31 percent) of cardiovascular clinical trials that include women report outcomes by sex.<sup>5</sup>

Cognitive errors in assessing merit, suitability for leadership, or evaluation of performance are embedded in institutional practices, often despite good intentions and a commitment to fairness.<sup>8</sup>

**WOMEN**  
metabolize drugs  
DIFFERENTLY  
than men.<sup>4</sup>

**WOMEN ARE**  
**70%**  
more likely to suffer  
**DEPRESSION**  
than men, yet  
**FEWER THAN 45%**  
of animal studies on anxiety  
and depression use female  
lab animals.<sup>3</sup>

In 1985, a U.S. Public Health Service task force found and stated that the 'lack of research focus on women's health concerns has compromised the quality of health information available to women as well as the health care they receive.' Almost two decades later, this is still overwhelmingly the case.<sup>6</sup>

While **45%** of doctorates are awarded to female students, only **30%** of active researchers and **18%** of full professors are women.<sup>7</sup>

Even when studies do include women, they often fail to stratify data by sex or include information about hormone status or any other gender-specific factors.

You may be interested to read or view the following media reports ahead of the session:

Sex Matters – US 60 Minutes investigates men, women and drug dosage.

Leaving Women's Health to Chance – Why you should care about the medical research gender gap.

CLICK  
TITLES TO  
VIEW

<sup>2</sup> Sex-Specific Medical Research Why Women's Health Can't Wait: A Report of the Mary Horrigan Connors Center for Women's Health & Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital p5 201

<sup>3</sup> <http://my.chicagotribune.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-79502994/> By Caroline Chen, Bloomberg News

<sup>4</sup> Sex-Specific Medical Research Why Women's Health Can't Wait: A Report of the Mary Horrigan Connors Center for Women's Health & Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital p5 2014

<sup>5</sup> Sex-Specific Medical Research Why Women's Health Can't Wait: A Report of the Mary Horrigan Connors Center for Women's Health & Gender Biology at Brigham and Women's Hospital p5 2014

<sup>6</sup> <http://my.chicagotribune.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-79502994/> By Caroline Chen, Bloomberg News

<sup>7</sup> European Commission, Structural Change in Research Institutions: Enhancing excellence, Gender Equality and Efficiency in Research Innovation, [http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public\\_topic&id=1222](http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public_topic&id=1222) Accessed on 16 April 2014

<sup>8</sup> ibid

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1761670/>