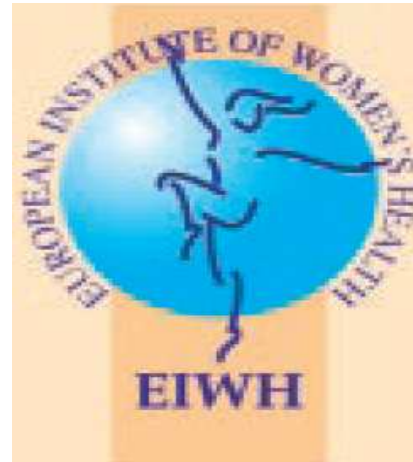




Women and CVD Policy + Recommendations

Red Alert for Women's Hearts





Women and CVD: Facts

- Cardiovascular disease has been a central theme of women's health studies and promotion efforts since the early 1990s.
- Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death of women in the European Union.
- More women die from cardiovascular disease than from all cancers combined.
- Women remain largely unaware of their risk of developing cardiovascular disease.



Women and CVD: Gender differences

Significant gender differences exist in relation to CVD:

- Women are less likely than men to identify their risk factors.
- Mortality from CVD is higher in female smokers than in male smokers.
- Women with diabetes have an increased risk for coronary artery disease and stroke than men with diabetes.
- CHD develops later in women's lives than men's lives.
- CVD diagnosis delay can be life-threatening to women.
- CVD treatment and care may be consequently less effective for women.



Women and CVD: Gender differences in Research

- Women are under-represented in CVD clinical trials, particularly in the fields of:
 - Cholesterol-lowering therapy
 - Ischaemic heart disease
 - Heart failure
- Safety and efficacy of several drugs have been evaluated mainly in male populations
- Scientific guidelines do not provide specific recommendations for prevention and treatment of women.



Women and CVD: Stroke

- Stroke kills more women than men, although more men have strokes. Stroke is a significant cause of mortality and morbidity in postmenopausal women.
- Gender differences exist in the presentation and outcome of stroke. In a European Biomed study involving over 4,000 stroke victims, female patients were significantly older than male patients. A history of hypertension was more frequent in women than in men, as were comas, paralysis, problems swallowing, and urinary incontinence in the acute phase.
- Gender differences exist in clinical management following acute stroke. However, information on the differences in management of stroke patients by gender is scarce.



Women and CVD: Risk factors associated with risk of cardiovascular events

- Biological: raised blood pressure, raised blood sugar, raised blood cholesterol, overweight, and obesity,
- Lifestyle determinants: tobacco use, unhealthy diet, alcohol abuse, physical inactivity.
- Broader Determinants (fixed): age, sex, genetics, and ethnicity.
- Broader Determinants (modifiable): income, education, living conditions, and working conditions.



Women and CVD: Healthy lifestyle

- Lower socio-economic class, especially in children, is a significant determinant for cardiovascular disease later in life.
- Girls participate less in physical activity than boys; girls often perceive of sport as a male activity.
- Obese women are 12 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than women of a healthy weight.
- Pregnant women who suffer from hypertension while pregnant are at greater risk of developing CVD in later life.