

Study: Men at higher risk for mild memory loss than women

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Men may be at higher risk of experiencing mild cognitive impairment (MCI), or the stage of mild memory loss that occurs between normal aging and dementia, than women, according to a study published in the January 25, 2012, online issue of *Neurology*.

"These results are surprising, given that women generally have higher rates of dementia than men," said study author R.O. (Rosebud) Roberts, MB ChB, MS, of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. "The risk of MCI in men and women combined was high in this age group of elderly persons. This is disturbing given that people are living longer, and MCI may have a large impact on [health care costs](#) if increased efforts at prevention are not used to reduce the risk."

For the study, a group of 1,450 people from Olmsted County, Minn., between the ages of 70 and 89 and free of dementia at enrollment underwent memory testing every 15 months for an average of three years. Participants were also interviewed about their memory by [medical professionals](#). By the end of the study period, 296 people had developed MCI.

The study found that the number of new cases of dementia per year was higher in men, at 72 per 1,000 people compared to 57 per 1,000 people in women and 64 per 1,000 people in men and women combined. MCI with [memory loss](#) present was more common at 38 per 1,000 people than MCI where memory loss was not present, which affected 15 per 1,000

people. Those who had less education or were not married also had higher rates of MCI.

"Our study suggests that [risk factors](#) for [mild cognitive impairment](#) should be studied separately in men and women," said Roberts.

Another finding of interest in the study showed that among people who were newly diagnosed with MCI, 12 percent per year were later diagnosed at least once with no MCI, or reverted back to what was considered "cognitively normal." Roberts said the majority of people with MCI, about 88 percent per year, continue to have MCI or progress to [dementia](#).

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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