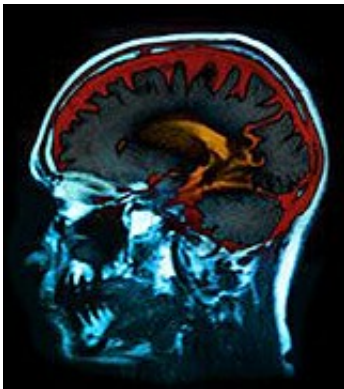


Men more prone to complications after brain, spine surgery

April 20 2012



They also spend longer in the hospital after neurosurgery, study finds.

(HealthDay) -- Men are twice as likely as women to have complications after brain or spinal surgery, and also spend more time in the hospital after the operation, a new study finds.

The findings suggest that a patient's gender, along with other factors, should be taken into account to provide the best possible estimates of risk for patients scheduled for neurosurgery, the University of Michigan Medical School researchers said.

The researchers analyzed data on more than 900 people who had brain or spinal surgery between 2006 and 2009. The overall complication rates within 30 days after surgery were 18.6 percent for [brain surgery](#) patients

and 10.8 percent for [spinal surgery](#) patients.

The complication rate for men was 20.3 percent, compared to 11.3 percent for women. The rate for men remained twice that of women even after the researchers adjusted for other factors such as age, tobacco and alcohol use, and health problems such as [high blood pressure](#), coronary artery disease and diabetes.

Complications also were more common in older patients and in those with [coronary artery disease](#).

Men spent an average of 7.5 days in the hospital, compared with 5.7 days for women. But gender did not affect the average length of stay in the [intensive care unit](#) after surgery.

Multiple factors likely contribute to the different complication rates in men and women, including "psychosocial, hormonal or underlying disease differences," the researchers said.

For example, the lower complication rate in women could be due to better social support, "neuroprotective" effects of estrogen or lower rates of cardiovascular disease.

The study appears in the April issue of the journal *Neurosurgery*.

More information: MedlinePlus has more about [neurosurgery](#).

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Citation: Men more prone to complications after brain, spine surgery (2012, April 20) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-04-men-prone-complications-brain-spine.html>

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