

Why does Alzheimer's disease affect twice as many women as men?

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Journal of Women's Health cover image. The journal, published monthly, is a core multidisciplinary journal dedicated to the diseases and conditions that hold greater risk for or are more prevalent among women, as well as diseases that present differently in women. Credit: ©2012 Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

A group of experts has developed consensus recommendations for future research directions to determine why nearly two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's disease (AD) are women. The recommendations are published in a Roundtable discussion in *Journal of Women's Health*.

An estimated 5.4 million Americans are affected by AD and related [dementias](#), and that number will likely rise to 11-16 million people by

the year 2050 if no effective cures or [preventive measures](#) are developed. The main risk factors for AD are age and sex, with affected women outnumbering men 2 to 1. This may be due at least in part to the fact that women tend to live longer.

An interdisciplinary roundtable of experts convened by the Society for Women's Health Research (Washington, DC) led to a set of recommendations to help guide future AD research and make the evaluation of sex and [gender differences](#) a component of future studies. The consensus recommendations encompass seven themes, including the need to assess the link between sex and AD incidence, raise awareness of [sex differences](#) among the research community, and to take into account sex-based differences in the experimental design and data analysis of studies on disease risk, early diagnosis, and [drug discovery](#).

"There are still major gaps in our knowledge of the role of sex and gender in the onset and progression of Alzheimer's disease, and these recommendations will provide a useful guide for future research in this area," says Susan G. Kornstein, MD, Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Women's Health*, Executive Director of the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health, Richmond, VA, and President of the Academy of Women's Health.

More information: The article is available free on the *Journal of Women's Health* website at <http://www.liebertpub.com/jwh>.

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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