

Women perform worse in CPR

May 8 2017



Credit: Universität Basel

Does it matter whether a man or a woman carries out CPR? Researchers at the University of Basel and University Hospital Basel have shown that female resuscitation teams performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation less efficiently than their male counterparts. The study suggests that there is a need for action in the training of young female physicians. The scientific journal *Critical Care Medicine* has published the results.

When somebody's heart stops, every second counts. Knowledge, ability and the interaction between members of the resuscitation team are vital

for swift action and a successful outcome. Earlier studies have shown that efficient and strong [leadership](#) communication improves the patient's chances of survival; students are thus taught these communication skills during their medical training.

However, to date, there has been little research into how gender affects performance in resuscitation situations. A study by the University of Basel and University Hospital Basel has now examined the differences between male and female medical students' performance and leadership behavior during CPR.

As part of the study, 216 medical students (108 women and 108 men) were divided into groups of three. A Basel-based research team documented and analyzed the performance of the individual groups during a simulated cardiac arrest scenario. They focused on hands-on time, defined as the uninterrupted CPR time within the first three minutes after the onset of the cardiac arrest, and also noted how often the participants made clear leadership statements, i.e. verbal commands to assign tasks or clarify how something should be done.

"In comparison with male-only teams, the female groups showed less hands-on time and took longer overall to start the CPR," says Professor Sabina Hunziker, the study leader. The female-only teams also showed less leadership communication compared with the male-only teams. Even in mixed teams, women made significantly fewer clear leadership statements than men.

Gender-specific training

The results show that there is an important difference between male and female rescuers. Although female medical students possessed at least the same level of theoretical knowledge as their male colleagues, they performed weaker overall. "This suggests that more targeted measures

need to be introduced to prepare and train women for emergency situations," says Hunziker. In light of the growing percentage of women in medical schools, the study also shows the importance of gender research for targeted and effective training.

More information: Simon Adrian Amacher et al. Influence of Gender on the Performance of Cardiopulmonary Rescue Teams, *Critical Care Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1097/CCM.0000000000002375](https://doi.org/10.1097/CCM.0000000000002375)

Provided by University of Basel

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