

Gender, pain and dementia

October 17 2017, by Bill Snyder

Men and women feel pain differently, and the same is true for people with Alzheimer's disease.

In a report published last month in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, Todd Monroe, Ph.D., and his colleagues conclude that these differences will need to be considered in order to improve the detection, evaluation and treatment of pain in this vulnerable population.

The researchers used a standard questionnaire to determine the psychophysical responses to increasing heat applied to the hands of 14 men and 14 women aged 65 and older with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. The women reported experiencing mild and moderate pain at markedly lower temperatures than did the men, but the men rated mild and [moderate pain](#) stimuli as more unpleasant.

While further studies are needed, these findings suggest that better understanding of the [sex differences](#) in the perception of pain could lead to more targeted and effective pain assessment and management strategies in older adults with Alzheimer's disease, the researchers concluded.

More information: Ronald L. Cowan et al. Sex Differences in the Psychophysical Response to Contact Heat in Moderate Cognitive Impairment Alzheimer's Disease: A Cross-Sectional Brief Report, *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* (2017). [DOI: 10.3233/JAD-170532](https://doi.org/10.3233/JAD-170532)

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