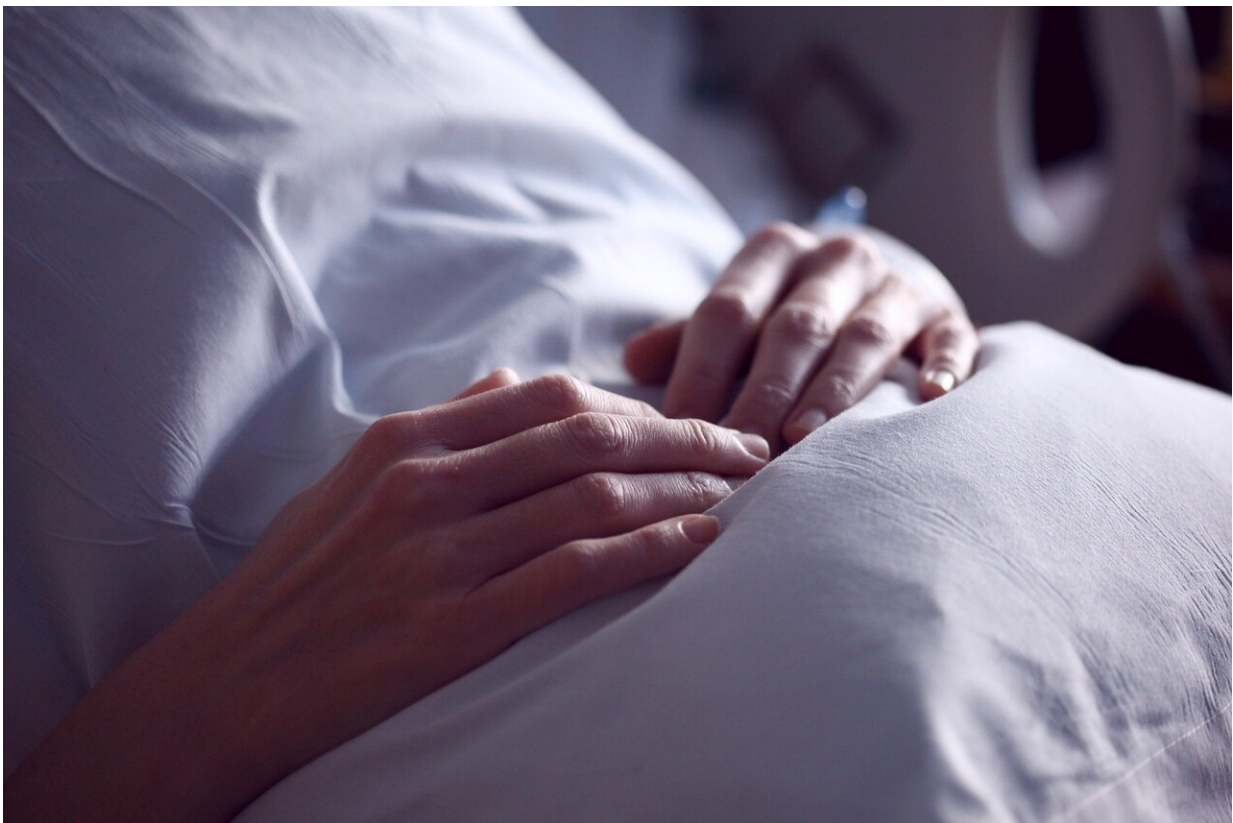


Patients seen by female gastroenterologists have less health care utilization than patients seen by male providers

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Patients seen by a female gastroenterologist for an initial consultation are less likely to use medical care in the emergency department, hospital or primary care office for two years after their visit when compared to patients initially seen by male gastroenterologists, according to a study presented at [Digestive Disease Week](#) (DDW) 2024, held May 18–21, in Washington, D.C.

"If there really is something different about the way female and male gastroenterologists provide care that impacts patient outcomes, it will be important to share these learnings broadly among [health care providers](#) to improve the standard of care for all patients," said lead author Laura Targownik, MD, clinician-investigator at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto and departmental division director, gastroenterology and hepatology, at the University of Toronto.

Researchers examined data from more than 2.7 million gastroenterology consultations between 2002 and 2020 from the Ontario Health IC/ES population-wide database, of which 15% of consultations were performed by female gastroenterologists and [female patients](#) comprised 55%.

Overall, female patients had a higher rate of [emergency department](#) visits and primary care visits than male patients; however, when female gastroenterologists provided the initial consultation, subsequent use of all health care services by all patients, regardless of gender, was lower when compared with patients initially seen by male gastroenterologists. The lower health care utilization after seeing a female gastroenterologist was more pronounced among female patients than males.

"We need more research to understand what is causing this difference in [patient outcomes](#)," said Grace Wang, gastroenterology resident,

University of Toronto.

"The next step is to take a closer look at the patient data—including preexisting conditions, the health care utilization patterns prior to an initial GI consultation, and the diagnoses that occur during that consultation—in order to investigate whether there are other factors driving patients' health care-seeking behavior."

More information: Dr. Targownik presents data from the study, "The impact of physician gender on health care utilization among men and women following initial GI consultation," abstract Sa1002, on Saturday, May 18, at 12:30 p.m. EDT.

Provided by Digestive Disease Week

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