

Study of over 10,000 patients suggests men experience more pain after major surgery

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New research presented at this year's Euroanaesthesia meeting in Stockholm suggests that gender plays a part in pain experienced after surgery, with men feeling more pain following major surgery while women feel more pain after minor procedures. The study is by Dr Andreas Sandner-Kiesling, Dept of Anaesthesiology & Intensive Care, Medical University of Graz, Austria, and colleagues.

"The influence of [gender](#) and sexes is a key issue of today's research in medicine. However, current literature in the field of perioperative medicine rarely focuses on this question," says Dr Sandner-Kiesling. "Our aim was to analyse a large population to find differences in postoperative pain perception in females and males."

Patients were interviewed 24 hours following their operation based on a purpose-designed questionnaire. This incorporated details about surgery and anaesthesia and questions about the patient's wellbeing and postoperative pain. The study took more than four years and 10,200 patients were interviewed (42% male, 58% female). The patients included in the study were from the University Hospitals of the Ruhr University of Bochum, Germany.

When analysing data for influences of sexes on postoperative pain overall, the researchers found no significant differences. However, after arranging data according to the different kind of surgeries, sexes showed significantly different results. Men were 27% more likely to experience a greater number of moderate pain episodes after major vascular and orthopaedic surgery, while women were 34% more likely to report higher pain ratings after minor procedures, such diagnostic procedures and biopsies.

The authors conclude: "The gender differences on pain perception are still heavily disputed, both in experimental and clinical fields. Our data do not

definitely clarify this issue; however, based on our findings it can be presumed that the type (and severity) of surgery may play a pivotal role, as females express higher [pain](#) scores after minor procedures, whereas males are more affected after [major surgery](#)."

Provided by European Society of Anaesthesiology

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