

Study confirms that doctors prescribe more painkillers to women

6 October 2014



Painkillers

Regardless of the pain type, age and social class, women are more likely to be prescribed analgesia than men. This is confirmed by a study conducted by several members of the Research Group on Public Health at the University of Alicante and funded by the Women's Institute, which recently received the XXIV Award of the Spanish Society of Epidemiology for the best original article published in the journal *Gaceta Sanitaria* in 2013.

The article, based on inequality in prescribing analgesics in Spain according to gender, confirms that [gender bias](#) may be one pathway by which inequalities in analgesic treatment adversely affects the health of women.

According to researcher Maria Teresa Ruiz-Cantero, it is true that women visit their doctors a greater number of times with symptoms of pain, but even eliminating the variable of pain, painkillers are still more often prescribed to women than men. In this sense, the results of the study confirm a [gender gap](#) of 29% in prescribing this type of medication.

Another bias is identified when women who have pain in less gender-sensitive regions are less likely to be treated by a specialist. In regions such as southern Spain, women are staying in primary care with analgesic treatment, whereas men are more often referred to specialists, Ruiz Cantero states.

This is a fact that - as emphasised by one of the authors of the article - directly affects the health of women and increases health spending by a high consumption of drugs especially in the south of the country.

More information: Elisa Chilet-Rosella, M. Teresa Ruiz-Cantero, José Fernández Sáeza, Carlos Álvarez-Dardet. "Desigualdad en prescripción de analgésicos en España. Una cuestión de desarrollo de género." *Gac Sanit.*2013;27:135-42 - Vol. 27 Núm.2 [DOI: 10.1016/j.gaceta.2012.04.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaceta.2012.04.014)

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