



World Mental Health Day —10th October 2012—

The European Institute of Women's Health (EIWH) invites its members, friends and colleagues to join us in recognition of World Mental Health Day to highlight mental health issues that women and their families across Europe encounter. This year the theme for the day is "Depression: A Global Crisis," a health issue that largely impacts women's health.

Mental health gender differences

Statistics on mental health problems often conceal the considerable differences that exist between men and women. In later life, women are more likely than men to suffer from poor mental health. These mental disorders have large implications for the health of women and of their families.

Depression in women

The European Commission believe that depression and depression-related problems account for more than 7% of all estimated ill-health and premature mortality in Europe.

The burden of depression includes the loss of quality of life for those affected and their families, a loss of productivity for firms, an increased risk of unemployment for individuals and consequently a higher burden on social security systems.

The EURODEP Programme examined levels of depression across Europe and explored geographical variation of depression in older people, risk factors, detection and treatment, and preliminary evidence showed higher proportions of depression in women than in men in almost all studies.

Although women disproportionately suffer from depression, women are not included in sufficient numbers in clinical trials throughout Europe, so these medications are primarily tested on men. Recent studies have shown, for instance, post-menopausal women taking anti-depressants increased risk of a stroke compared to women who do not take them.

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Thus, the effectiveness of depression treatments differs between men and women and is not fully understood. The EIWH would therefore argue for the inclusion of women in clinical trials that reflects the prevalence of the disease, in order to ensure results are statistically relevant and explicit.

Let's work together across Europe

Only concerted efforts by all stakeholders working together to make the mental health women, particularly combatting depression, a priority and to garner the political will and the resources to eliminate the current inequalities that many women face across Europe.

For more information, please visit:

- European Institute of Women's Health: <http://eurohealth.ie/>
- WHO World Mental Health Day:
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/annual/world_mental_health_day/en/index.html
- Mental Health Europe: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/>

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