Heart Disease Overlooked In Women

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Coronary artery disease (CAD) continues to be neglected in women, despite it killing at least as many women as men, a state-of-the-art review found.

In addition, women are less likely to receive preventive therapies, such as lipid-lowering therapies and lifestyle advice compared with men at a similar risk level, according to Martha Gulati, MD [1], and Kavita Sharma, MD, from The Ohio State University in Columbus.

"CAD is a leading cause of death of women [2] and men worldwide. Yet CAD's impact on women traditionally has been underappreciated due to higher rates at younger ages in men," they wrote.

Women are disproportionately affected by microvascular coronary disease and they have unique risk factors for CAD [3], including those related to pregnancy and autoimmune disease, they wrote in a review in this month's edition of *Global Heart*, the journal of the World Heart Federation.

In their review, the authors summarized "the current state of knowledge about women and CAD," including risk assessment, unique sex-specific CAD characteristics, and management strategies in 2013.

CT scans and other imaging techniques show that women have narrower coronary arteries than do men, and are more likely to suffer CAD due to microvascular disease. So while appearing not to have major coronary artery obstructions, women suffer symptoms due to blockages of these smaller vessels.

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