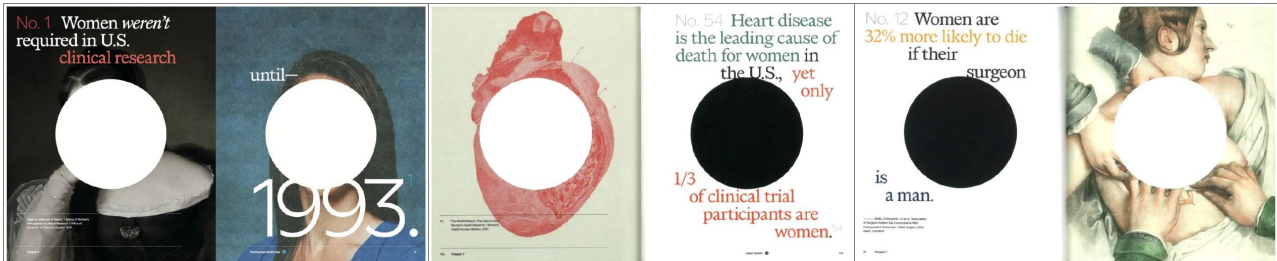


Gender inequality is bad for your health

Evvy's Equal Research Day – And New Book – Exposes Gender Health Gaps



In 2022, Jimmy Kimmel Live took to the streets. There, the show's interviewer stopped random men and asked them questions about basic female anatomy and health, including "Do most women have one uterus or two?", "What does PMS stand for and how often does it happen?" and "What part of the body does a mammogram examine?". None of the men knew the correct answers. In 2023, the same interviewer asked different men similar questions. Again, none of the men knew. These two segments, titled "What Do You Know About the Female Body?", showed that many people don't actually know that much. And while the Jimmy Kimmel Live segments are recent, that knowledge gap has existed for hundreds of years. The first known clinical trial took place in 1747, and, in the centuries that followed, scientists developed the first vaccines, discovered penicillin, invented the first EKG machine, performed the first human heart transplant, and more. But all these innovations – as well as the foundational research, data, and development behind them – were done without women.

"Everything starts with research and data," says Priyanka Jain, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Evvy. Evvy, a New York-based women's health startup, was founded in 2021 after its three co-founders – Ms. Jain, Chief Scientific Officer Pita Navarro, and Chief Marketing Officer Laine Bruzek – learned that women weren't required in clinical research in the United States until 1993. That year - 246 years after the first clinical trial had taken place - Congress passed the NIH Revitalization Act to require the inclusion of "women and minorities" in clinical trials for the very first time. All the scientific and medical advancements that had transpired prior were based solely on men, leaving women – and, subsequently, women's health – understudied, under-researched, and, overall, unequal.

Evvy is working to help close the resulting gender health gaps: the inequities in healthcare, including access and outcomes, between men and women. [...] Examples of the gender health gap exist across all fields of healthcare, including cardiovascular health, autoimmune diseases, and prescription drugs. Women are 50% more likely to be misdiagnosed following a heart attack, even though cardiovascular disease - which includes heart attacks - is the leading cause of death in women, killing about one in three every year. For another example, as many as 80% of Americans with an autoimmune disease are women but no more than 40% of participants in autoimmune disease-focused clinical trials are women. And between 1997 and 2000, just a few years after the 1993 NIH Revitalization Act was passed, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) pulled 10 prescription drugs from the market, eight of which caused greater health risks in women than men. The "serious male biases in basic, preclinical, and clinical research" behind these drugs meant that their effects on women weren't revealed until after the drugs were commercially available. Despite these withdrawals, sex biases still continue in clinical trials, leading to adverse drug reactions and overmedication, among others, in women today.

Even if men and women are experiencing the same disease, women are diagnosed on average, four years later than men are - if the women are even diagnosed correctly in the first place. For cancer specifically, that diagnostic discrepancy is two and a half years. In other words, women with cancer spend over 912 days more than men enduring the time, financial, and emotional costs of seeing doctors yet getting incorrectly diagnosed, losing productivity at work, and missing moments with loved ones. "What could you do with two and a half more years of your life?" asks Ms. Bruzek. In fact, the gender health gap equates to 75 million years of life lost collectively per year due to poor health or early death. [...]

For this year's Equal Research Day, Evvy brought those facts together for a limited-edition coffee table book, titled "100 Effed Facts About The Gender Health Gap: A Very Incomplete List of Ways the Female Body Has Been Left Behind by Modern Medicine". [...] Every cent goes to Women's Health Access Matters (WHAM), a non-profit working to "increase awareness of and accelerate funding for women's health research to transform women's lives and impact the economy". After all, advancing women's health and improving the country's economy go hand-in-hand: investing \$350M in women's health would generate \$14B to the United States economy.

By Eva Epker, *Forbes*, Dec 13, 2024

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/evaepker/2024/06/10/evvys-equal-research-day--and-new-bookexposes-gender-health-gaps/>