

Sex: Evidence of health inequalities affecting women and men

Evidence last updated on 27th January 2012

Men's health

Men are **less likely to use their GP** which can lead to late diagnosis¹

Men are more likely to take exercise but less likely to eat the recommended amounts of **fruit and vegetables**².

Men die four years younger than women, are twice as likely to get the 10 most common **cancers** affecting both sexes. They have higher rates of **heart disease and obesity** yet they are far less likely to access health services. Men aged between 15 and 45 see their GP half as often as women.

“It is clear that there is an issue here. The NHS is just not designed around the needs of men. Men are more likely to work full-time, meaning most GPs are not available when they are.

“But it is also to do with how men are being brought up to manage their health. They are not socialised or exposed to it in the way women are through contraception, ante-natal care and screening. This means they feel less confident and familiar about it.”³

Men are more likely to first access **mental health** services earlier in their lives between the ages of 18 and 35. ⁴

¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, “How fair is Britain?” (2010)
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/how-fair-is-britain/online-summary/health>

² Ibid

³ Professor Alan White, (Leeds Metropolitan University) “Opening up Men’s Health in Bradford”
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=9142005>

⁴ BDCT Equality Analysis

Women's health

Women are more likely to eat the recommended amounts of fruit and vegetables but less likely to take **exercise**.⁵

The 2010 National Audit of **Cardiac Rehabilitation** (NACR) demonstrated that women are under-represented in cardiac rehabilitation. If men and women were taking part in proportion to the case rates for heart attack, we would expect there to be 63% men and 37% women. In practice, women made up 32% of referrals but only 26% of participants. It is mainly older women who are under-represented in cardiac rehabilitation; women over the age of 80 are less likely to take part than men of the same age.⁶

Women are more likely to access **mental health** services later in life aged between 45 and 60.⁷

Violence against women

The World Health Organisation states three reasons why violence against women should be a priority issue for health workers. These are:

- violence causes extensive suffering and negative health consequences for a significant proportion of the female population (more than 20% in most countries)
- it has a direct negative impact on several important health issues, including safe motherhood, family planning, the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS
- for many women who have been abused, health workers are the main, and often the only, point of contact with public services which may be able to offer support and information.⁸

Staff

Staff surveys show that in NHS Bradford and Airedale female staff are more likely to have experienced harassment, bullying or abuse from patients, relatives or the public and from other staff members in the last 12 months.

However at Bradford District Care Trust male staff members are more likely to have experienced harassment, bullying or abuse and violence from patients, relatives or the public and from other staff members in the last 12 months.

⁵ Equality and Human Rights Commission, "How fair is Britain?" (2010)

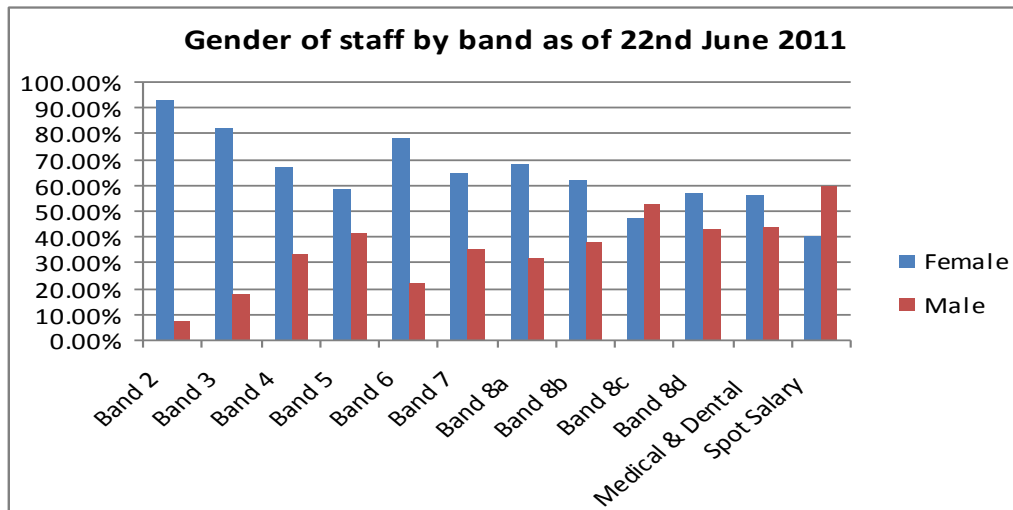
⁶ [NACR Annual Report 2010](#)

⁷ BDCT Equality Analysis

⁸ Violence against women. Definition and scope of the problem, WHO

Pay banding

The majority of staff working in the NHS, both locally and nationally are women. However as the table below shows, proportionally more men are employed at the higher bands. These figures are for NHS Bradford and Airedale and included as an example:⁹



Women tend to stay in lower band jobs for longer whereas men stay in those roles for significantly less time¹⁰.

Because the proportions of men working at each band gradually increases as you move up into the more senior bands there is likely to be a pay gap between women and men.

⁹ Data gathered from electronic staff record for an Equality Impact Assessment

¹⁰ Analysis of Electronic Staff Record (ESR) data