

REVIEW

WOMEN AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES

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Abstract: *Cardiovascular diseases have been the leading causes of death worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation, an estimated 17.9 million people died from cardiovascular diseases in 2019, meaning 32% of all global deaths. In the last decades there had been ongoing efforts in raising awareness through campaigns about the impact of cardiovascular disease in women. These efforts, combined with a raise in the socio-demographic index, led to a global decline in age-standardised cardiovascular disease mortality in women in the past 30 years. There are many differences regarding the biological, social, research data, access to healthcare between men and women. This review summarises the latest evidence regarding the traditional risk factors for cardiovascular disease in women, the gender disparities that lead to different outcomes in the primary and secondary prevention in men and women and the under recognised risk factors of the modern society, such as depression, anxiety, chronic stress, abuse and intimate violence and environmental risk factors. Most of the risk factors can be identified early in the life of patients and are modifiable, therefore early screening and intensive risk factor modification, along with medications in certain patients, would make a difference in the outcome of the primary prevention.*

Keywords: cardiovascular risks, women, cardiovascular disease, menopause, gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia.

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decade it has been an accelerated process of social, cultural, scientific and technological development. The biological differences between men and women and the influence of cultures that conditionate the access to knowledge, scientific tools and qualitative healthcare are just a few factors that need to be unravelled for a better understanding of the sex-specific differences in outcomes and cardiovascular disease burden.

The Lancet women and cardiovascular disease Commission is the first effort of this

kind that aims to reduce the global burden by 2030 through raising global awareness of gender-related disparities regarding cardiovascular disease, providing recommendations from an international team of experts in this field and a springboard for future research [1]. Cardiovascular disease mortality has indeed declined in the female population in the last 30 years but this effect was best noticed in high-income and well developed countries, while in the most other regions of the world the numbers remained unchanged and actually in the countries with a low-income and quality