



Improving Men's Health

A report for the Men's Health Initiative of B.C.

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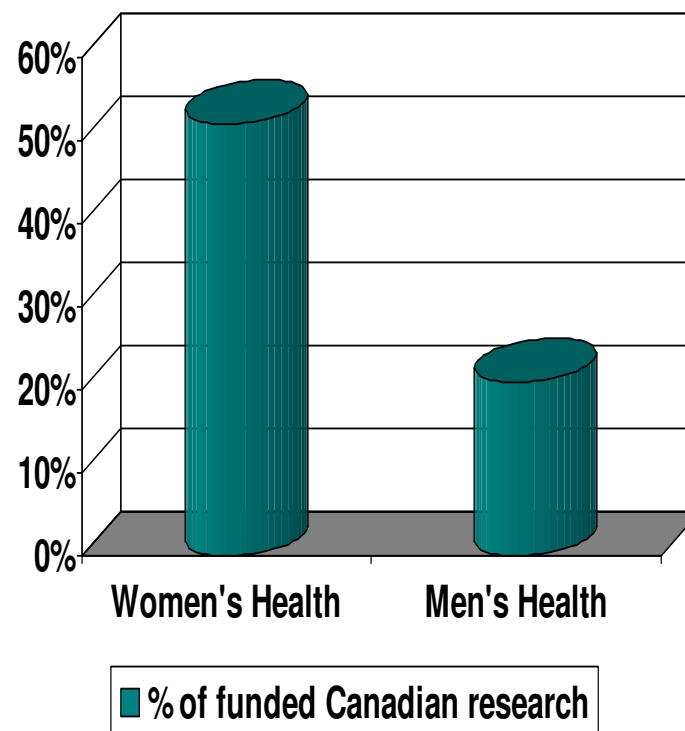
Dr. Larry Goldenberg

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Why this report is needed

- Canadian men die, on average, 4-5 years before women
- Men have higher rates of mortality for leading causes of death
- Men's health receives much less research focus than women's health
- There has been a "Women's Health" perspective in health care for decades



What this report covers

1. Male-specific conditions

**Prostate Cancer/ Testicular Cancer/
Hypogonadism/ Male Sexual Dysfunction**

(Covered by the other experts speaking here today)

2. Male-risk conditions (for which being male is a risk factor)

**Cardiovascular Disease/ Suicide/ Motor Vehicle
Accidents/ Osteoporosis/ Lung Cancer/ HIV**

What are possible factors in men dying before women?

1. Biological Factors

hormonal, brain structure, other physical differences

2. Environmental Factors

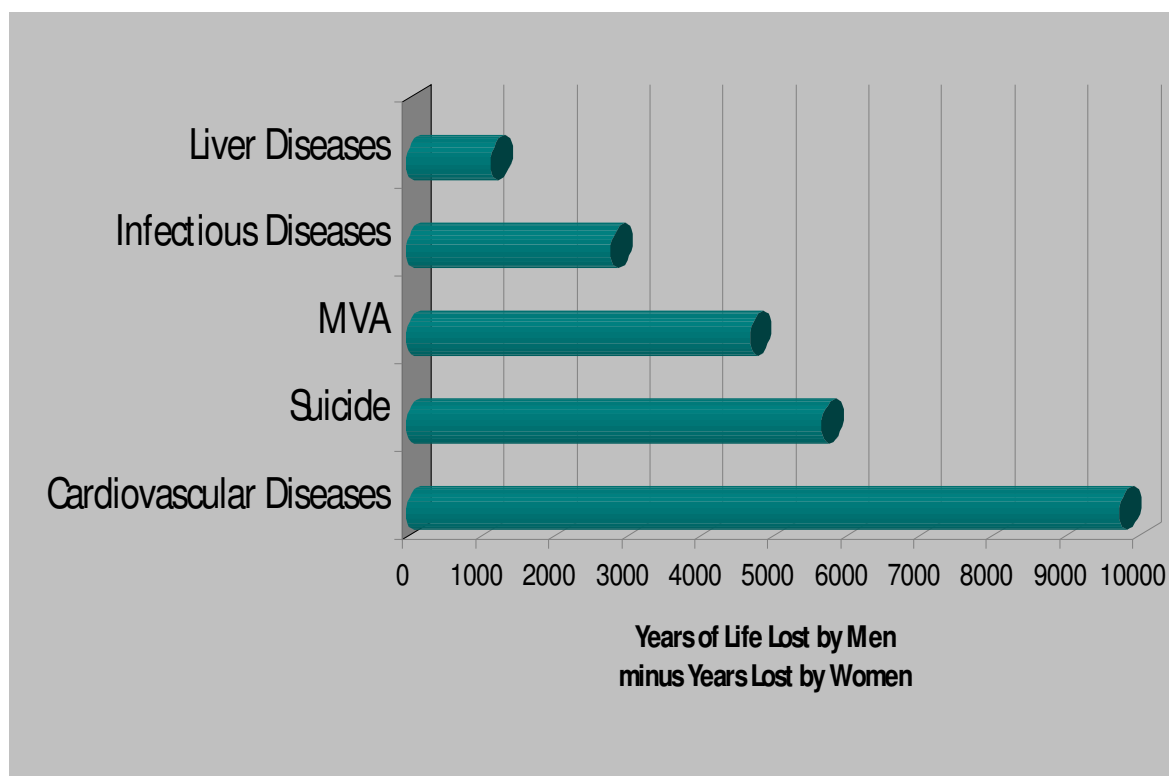
riskier jobs, less social support

3. Behavioural Factors

higher risk-taking, avoidance of health care, refusal of preventive lifestyle (exercise, nutrition, etc.)

Masculine role

Which conditions cause men to die before women?



The Big Three:

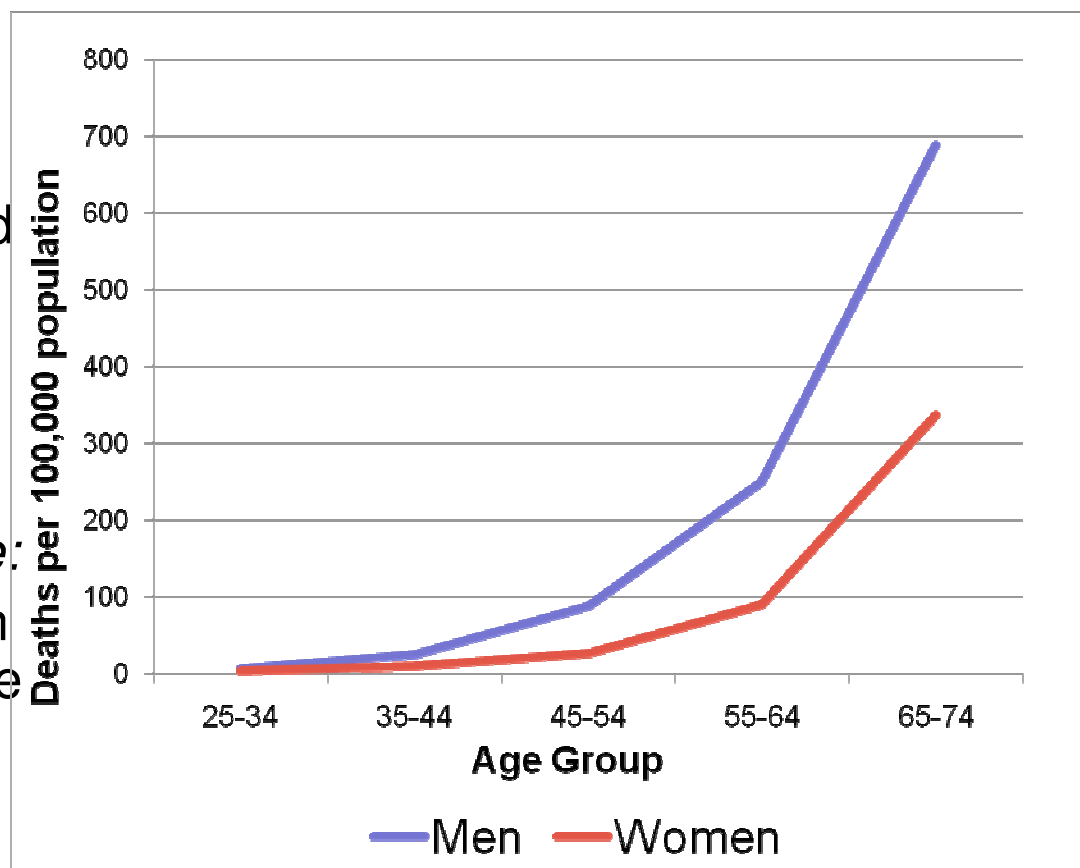
- **Cardiovascular Disease**
- **Suicide**
- **Motor Vehicle Accidents**

Cardiovascular disease

- Strikes men more often and earlier than women
- Does estrogen protect the heart?

Factors in gender difference:

- Poor nutritional habits (high sodium, low fruit & vegetable intake)
- Overweight
- Poor anger management?



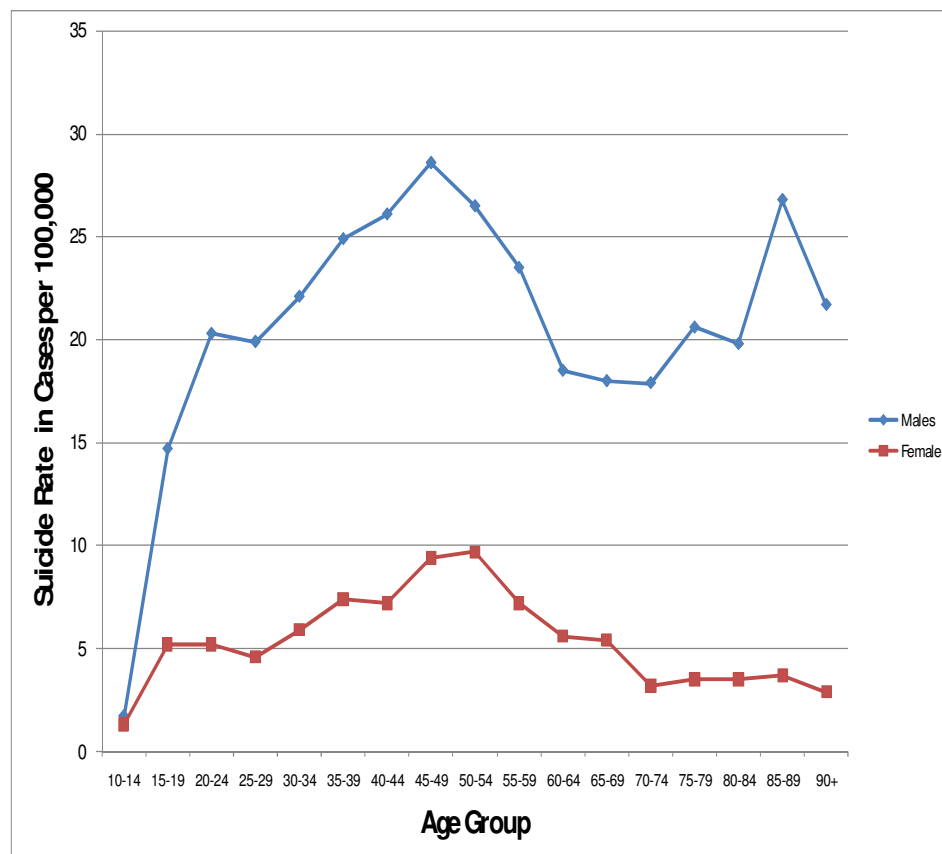
Deaths by CVD

Suicide

- Men carry out suicide 3-4 x more than women/ Highest rate in middle-age

Factors in gender difference:

- Willingness to use lethal methods
- Reluctance to talk about emotional distress or seek help for it
- Higher levels of alcohol use
- Greater tendency to move quickly from thought to action



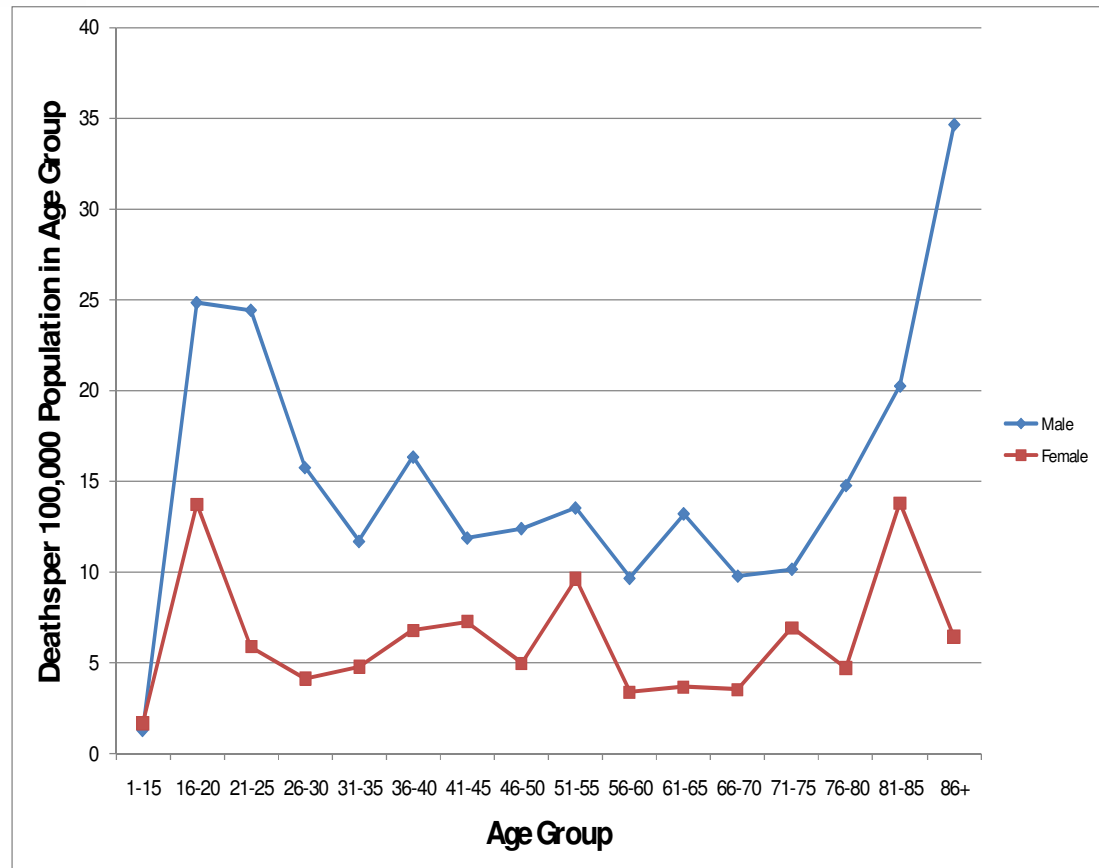
Deaths by Suicide

Motor Vehicle Accidents

- High proportion of deaths in the late teens and 20s (= many years of life lost)

Factors in gender difference:

- High levels of risk-taking (speeding and reckless driving)



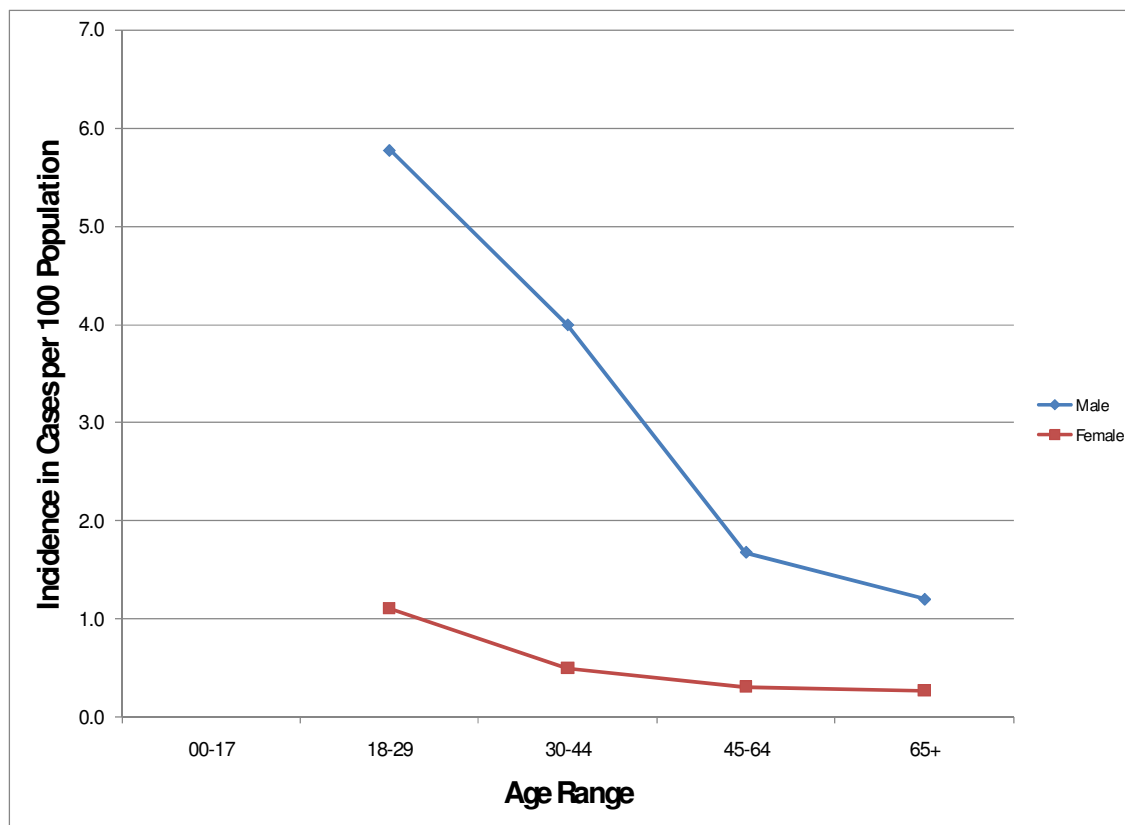
Deaths from MVAs

Alcohol Abuse

Mortality from alcohol is 6 times higher for men than women

Factors in gender difference:

- Young men are socially reinforced for excessive drinking and the associated risk-taking
- Masculine role



Incidence of alcohol abuse

Recommendations: Research Questions

- How can we enhance men's health-protective behaviours?
↓ Risk-taking ↑ Preventive lifestyle
- What are men's pathways to suicidal behaviour?
Why is the rate highest for middle-aged men?

Recommendations: Clinical Practice

- Greater focus on men's health issues in primary care, e.g. risky drinking, suicidal ideation, nutrition
- Decision Aids to support men in making decisions re PSA screening, Prostate Cancer treatment options, etc.
- Other ways to engage men in health-protective behaviour -- e.g. self-management materials around lifestyle, risky drinking and mood

Recommendations: Policy Directions

- Development of male-friendly healthcare services, e.g. Men's Health clinic
- Prevention programs to address men's suicide; and alcohol abuse, risky driving in youths & young men
- Health Promotion activities targeting health-protective lifestyle changes in men (nutrition/exercise)



The aims are to

- **engage men more fully in the healthcare system**
- **respond to their needs more appropriately**
- **someday achieve equality of life expectancy between men and women.**

