

Epidemiology and Public Health Strategies for Chronic Diseases Predominantly Affecting Women

Jiahe Yu^{1*}

¹Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, 138 Xianlin Road, Nanjing, 210023, China

Abstract. Chronic diseases are a major global health concern, disproportionately affecting women. Key concerns include metabolic syndrome, autoimmune diseases (e.g., Systemic lupus erythematosus, SLE), gynecological cancers (breast, cervical), and cardiovascular diseases (CVD). In the USA, about 36% of women have metabolic syndrome. Breast cancer accounted for 12.5% of global new cancer cases in 2020, and CVD causes 37.4% of global women deaths, often underdiagnosed. Hormonal shifts, genetic susceptibility, and environmental factors drive these diseases. Effective interventions include targeted screening, lifestyle adjustments, and gender-tailored health education. However, challenges like misdiagnosis, healthcare disparities, and research limitations (small samples and gender bias) still persist. Future researches need comprehensive demographic data and multimorbidity studies. Targeted public health strategies are critical to improve women's health outcomes.

1 Introduction

Chronic diseases, which include illnesses like gynecologic diseases, immune system disorders, metabolic syndrome, and hematological and cardiovascular disorders, are a major global concern that disproportionately affect women. Obesity, hypertension, and diabetes are the hallmarks of metabolic syndrome, a condition linked to higher rates of morbidity and mortality in women. A considerable amount of cancer-related morbidity and mortality in women is caused by gynecological cancer, which includes breast and cervical cancer and poses serious health risks [1]. Women are disproportionately affected by autoimmune diseases, such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), which can drastically lower their lifespan and quality of life.

Despite being a major cause of death for women, cardiovascular diseases are frequently misdiagnosed and treated later than they should because of sex-specific symptomatology. Developing successful public health strategies that place a high priority on prevention, early diagnosis, and appropriate interventions requires a thorough understanding of the epidemiology of these chronic conditions. Because women's health is influenced by unique biological and sociocultural factors, health interventions must be tailored. In order to improve individual health outcomes and to inform public health policies and resource allocation, it is critical to address the disparities in the prevalence of these chronic diseases among women. The significance of this research resides in its ability to guide population-specific health strategies. By examining the intricacies of these chronic illnesses, public health programs can be

better tailored to the unique risk factors and obstacles faced by women.

We still don't fully understand the prevalence, consequences, and intersections of chronic diseases in women, despite an increase in research. Numerous studies have limited generalizability across diverse populations, lack comprehensive demographic data, and concentrate on single conditions [2]. Furthermore, the lack of thorough demographic data in previous studies limits the findings' generalizability and applicability across various populations. With a focus on the prevalence and public health implications of chronic diseases that primarily affect women, this review attempts to methodically assess epidemiological evidence in this area. In order to effectively address knowledge gaps, we also look at the methods currently being used to treat these illnesses and pinpoint areas that require more research. Our main goal is to help public health efforts work better by giving people a better understanding of the long-term health problems that women face.

2 Chronic disease burden among women

2.1 Unique traits of chronic diseases in women

Chronic diseases have a big effect on women's health because they often show up with different symptoms and rates of occurrence than they do in men. Women are most likely to have metabolic syndrome, autoimmune diseases, gynecological cancers, and cardiovascular diseases.

Obesity, hypertension, and insulin resistance are metabolic syndromes that increase the likelihood of

* Corresponding author: 012424243@njucm.edu.cn

developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Studies show that hormonal changes and other things, like a lack of exercise and bad eating habits, make women more likely to get metabolic syndrome, especially if they have already gone through menopause.

Reports say that women are 2 to 10 times more likely than men to have autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) [3]. There are many causes of these diseases, including environmental, hormonal, and genetic factors [4].

The most common cancers in women are still gynecological, particularly breast and cervical cancers. Around 2.3 million new cases of breast cancer were reported in 2020, making it the most common cancer diagnosed in women worldwide.

Meanwhile, cervical cancer remains a significant health threat, especially in low-income countries where screening and vaccination access are limited.

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) have emerged as the leading cause of death among women, surpassing cancer in mortality burden. Women often experience different symptoms than men, contributing to delays in diagnosis and disparities in treatment outcomes. Key risk factors include hypertension, diabetes, and smoking, with incidence increasing significantly after menopause due to declining estrogen levels.

2.2 Epidemiological trends and public health implications

Recent data underscore the alarming trends in chronic disease prevalence among women. In the United States, metabolic syndrome affects an estimated 36% of women, with risk rising sharply with age [5]. Autoimmune diseases such as SLE are strikingly gendered, with approximately 90% of cases occurring in women and incidence rates ranging from 3 to 7 per 100,000 women annually. Gynecological cancers remain a global concern: breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women, accounting for 12.5% of all new cancer cases and 6.9% of all cancer deaths in 2020 [6], while cervical cancer affects around 604,000 women worldwide annually, resulting in over 341,000 deaths despite the availability of effective vaccines [7]. Cardiovascular diseases cause nearly one in three women's deaths in the United States, with women aged 65 and older at particularly high risk [8]. It is estimated that cardiovascular disease accounts for 37.4% of all female deaths worldwide, illustrating a pressing need for targeted prevention strategies.

These figures collectively highlight the urgent need for health policies and prevention measures to address the particular risks of chronic diseases that women face.

3 Pathophysiological mechanisms and interventions in women's chronic diseases

3.1 Pathophysiological mechanisms of major diseases

Insulin resistance, increased adiposity, systemic inflammation, and dyslipidemia are the main pathophysiological mechanisms that underlie metabolic syndrome. Hormonal factors frequently cause women to display distinct forms of metabolic syndrome, especially during the perimenopausal stage when marked fluctuations in estrogen levels can worsen metabolic dysfunction. This hormonal change affects overall metabolic health and raises the risk of cardiovascular disease by increasing the propensity to accumulate visceral fat.

A complex interaction between environmental triggers and genetic predisposition results in an aberrant immune response, which is a hallmark of autoimmune diseases. Women are more likely to suffer from autoimmune diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). This is believed to be because hormones, particularly estrogen, alter the immune system's function. According to studies, estrogens increase the synthesis of autoantibodies, which makes disease flares worse in female patients.

There are numerous subtypes of gynecological cancers, especially breast and cervical cancers, each with unique biological mechanisms and epidemiological patterns. Reproductive factors like parity, menopause, and age at first menstruation can affect the incidence of these cancers [9]. For example, the use of hormonal contraceptives and the timing of childbirth can have a major impact on the risk of breast cancer, and prolonged exposure to estrogen during the reproductive years is a key factor in the pathophysiology of the disease.

There are notable gender differences in cardiovascular diseases (CVD), with women frequently exhibiting unusual symptoms that may result in incorrect diagnosis or postponed treatment. Women's cardiovascular risk profiles are changed by a number of factors, including changes in hormones, especially during menopause. Furthermore, women's risk may not be sufficiently assessed by conventional risk assessment instruments, calling for a review of screening procedures.

3.2 High-risk populations

Understanding the prevalence of chronic diseases in women requires not only biological mechanisms but also the identification of social, cultural, and economic risk factors. Due to obstacles in healthcare access, education, and socioeconomic status, marginalized groups—such as low-income and minority groups—face increased health risks. Equity-focused public health interventions are necessary to address these disparities and address the unique needs of women.

3.3 Prevention and management strategies

3.3.1 Screening and Early Detection

Preventing and managing chronic diseases still depends on the use of targeted screening and early detection. Regular Pap smears and mammograms, for example, have been shown to enhance the prognosis for cancer by promoting early detection [10]. To minimize delayed diagnoses and negative outcomes, it is essential to improve gender-sensitive screening methods for metabolic and cardiovascular diseases.

You need both medical and non-medical treatments to take care of long-term illnesses. Making changes to your lifestyle, like working out, getting help for your mental health, and eating well, is very important for managing chronic disease. Research suggests that leading a healthy lifestyle could help to reduce the risk of developing heart disease and metabolic syndrome.

It is important to recognise the value of integrated methodologies [11].

3.3.2 Instructing Women on Their Health

For health education programmes to be more effective, they should be designed specifically for women. Such initiatives should address women's health needs and provide them with the information they require to make informed choices that will improve their health.

4 Challenges and research gaps in women's chronic disease management

4.1 Barriers in healthcare and clinical settings

Women with chronic illnesses encounter numerous enduring challenges that complicate the management and treatment of their disorders. According to a review [12], women often report more pain and different symptoms than men, which might lead to wrong diagnosis and treatment regimens that aren't the best. Additionally, societal and organizational variables that often lead to differences in access to healthcare affect the quality of care that women receive. These challenges highlight the imperative for targeted solutions in the management of chronic illnesses that disproportionately affect women.

4.2 The Role of Personalized and Multidisciplinary Care

A multidisciplinary approach incorporating personalised medicine could improve treatment outcomes. According to Montgomery and Dickenson, incorporating various perspectives on healthcare — such as psychological, physiological and social factors — can facilitate the development of more targeted treatment plans. This comprehensive approach considers women's medical needs as well as their emotional and social circumstances, thereby improving health outcomes [13].

4.3 Limitations in Current Studies

Although research on chronic diseases in women has made some progress, there are still issues with the way it is conducted. A lot of studies don't accurately describe what women from different groups go through because of gender bias and small sample sizes, which means the research findings aren't really applicable. Also, the fact that the study's participants were all white made the conclusions and the overall understanding of women's health issues questionable.

4.4 Future Research Direction

To bridge these gaps, future research should aim to increase the generalisability of studies by collecting comprehensive demographic data that reflects the varied experiences of women from a range of backgrounds. It is also crucial to conduct more studies on women with multiple chronic conditions, as these could provide valuable insights into how existing health issues exacerbate the challenges faced by women [14]. Such research can inform the development of personalised solutions that address the complex needs of women with chronic illnesses.

5 Conclusion

The study concludes by discussing the significant challenges women still face when dealing with long-term health issues, such as unequal access to care and treatment. It emphasises the importance of taking a multidisciplinary approach to personalised medicine, while recognising the psychological, physiological and social dimensions of women's health. Two significant challenges that need to be addressed in the current literature are gender bias and small sample sizes. In order to better understand the health needs of women, future studies must focus on the intersection of chronic conditions and inclusive demographic data.

There are some public health strategies that need to be put in place to help improve women's health. These strategies should focus on the specific health needs of women and include care plans that get all the medical professionals working together. Particular attention should be paid to inclusive research methods to better represent the diverse experiences of women. Also, we need to make sure that everyone has equal access to healthcare policies that deal with social issues so that we can make lasting improvements to women's health. If we focus on these important areas, we can build a healthcare system that is more responsive to women's needs. This will lay the foundation for their long-term health.

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