

"OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S HEALTH" - PART 1

BETHESDA, M.D. — A new and expanded biomedical research agenda is required to address women's health, according to a report entitled "Opportunities for Research on Women's Health," released recently by the National Institutes of Health.

"For too long, research has centered on men and the normative standard," said Bernadine Healy, M.D., Director of the National Institutes of Health. "We now know that we must include women in our research and gather the data that can help treat the unique problems affecting women's health."

Dr. Healy continued, "This report sets forth an agenda for

national research efforts in women's health. The National Institutes of Health is committed to closing the gaps that still exist in our knowledge about women's health. The Women Health Initiative, the largest study of women in history, is an example of this commitment. It's time to take care of our caretakers."

This report, which will provide the basis for a research agenda, is specific to the health problems of women and states that:

- Over a lifetime, women's health is worse than men's;
- Women will constitute the larger population and will be the most susceptible to disease in the future;

Opportunities for Research on Women's Health

- Certain health problems are more prevalent in women than in men; and
- Certain health problems are unique to women or affect women differently than they do men.

The three major killers of American women are:

1. Heart Disease: 365,625 deaths each year;
2. Cancer: 232,815 deaths each year; and
3. Stroke: 88,220 deaths each year.

Yet, knowledge about the causes, expression, and treatment of these diseases has too often been derived from studies of men and applied to women with the supposition that there are no differences. Vivian Pinn, M.D., Director of the Office of Research on Women's Health, said, "The Office of Research on Women's Health has set an aggressive agenda to ensure that research will be conducted on women's health issues, such that gender-appropriate health care can be available. This report, developed during the past year under the leadership of a task force with participation of physicians, other scientists, behaviorists, and community advocates, has been incorporated into our office's priorities and plans for the future."

The report shows that women's health is affected by

other diseases as well:

- 65% of women over the age of 60 suffer from osteoporosis, which makes bones brittle, resulting in fractures.
- Opportunities for Research on Women's Health
- Every year, 6 million American women, half of whom are teenagers, acquire a sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Women are the fastest growing population with AIDS.
- More than 100,000 infants die or suffer birth defects be-

cause of STDs transmitted during pregnancy or at birth.

- Rheumatoid arthritis affects women three times more than men.
- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) occurs nine times more often in women than in men; there are 500,000 cases of SLE in the United States.
- Diabetes mellitus and multiple sclerosis occur more often in women than in men.
- Approximately 27% of cancer deaths among women

are accounted for by cancers of the breast (44,000) and of the reproductive system—ovarian (12,500), cervical (4,500), and uterine (5,500).

• Lung cancer has surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer death in women. Lung cancer is almost entirely due to cigarette smoking and the rate parallels the rate of increase in smoking among women.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

HONORING AN ATLANTA JOURNALIST



HONORING AN ATLANTA JOURNALIST—Monica Kaufman, WSB-TV news anchor, receives the Miller Lite Women's Sports Journalism award from Sophia Nieves, marketing public relations supervisor for Miller Brewing Company, during a press conference in New York Oct. 5, 1992.

Kaufman's winning news story in the local television category revealed there had never been a female member of the Georgia High School Association, which governs interscholastic competition.

The Miller Lite Women's Sport Journalism Awards recognize journalists who have done exemplary work in covering women's sports and issues relating to them. This is the sixth year of the competition intended to increase the amount of space and air time devoted to women's sports.

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FOR THE LADIES

spotlight on health

New Surgical Procedure Benefits Women

A growing number of the more than 650,000 American women who have hysterectomies (surgical removal of the uterus) every year, are benefitting from a new, minimally invasive surgical technique that dramatically reduces hospital stay, pain, scarring, recuperative time and costs for many patients.

Called Laparoscopically Assisted Vaginal Hysterectomy, or LAVH, the new procedure is gaining acceptance among surgeons and patients because of a new instrument developed by United States Surgical Corporation. In addition to serving as the surgeon's scalpel, the instrument simultaneously seals each edge of the cut tissue with three rows of tiny surgical staples, reducing blood loss and tissue trauma and eliminating the need for tedious hand sewing.

Like other laparoscopic surgery, LAVH is performed through tiny incisions using specialized surgical instru-

ments. The surgeon views a magnified image of a patient's internal organs on a video monitor via a laparoscope—a tiny telescope connected to a camera.

Until recently, abdominal hysterectomy patients faced a hospital stay of nearly a week, up to six weeks of painful recovery and were left with an unsightly four-to-six inch scar. In contrast, most women who undergo LAVH can leave the hospital within two days following surgery, have minimal pain, only 3-4 tiny marks and return to their normal activities in a week or two.

Laparoscopy was pioneered by gynecologists in the 1960s and is currently used for appendectomy, hernia repair, lung and bowel surgery and a broad range of gynecological procedures. Nearly 80% of all gallbladder surgery is done this way.

An informative brochure about LAVH is available free by calling 800-423-USCC.

BEAUTY BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Beauty Between Generations is the topic of a mother/daughter workshop taking place at 7 p.m., Monday, November 9 at the Mirabelli Community Center, 6200 Elton Ave. Registration continues through November 4 at a cost of \$1 per couple. Daughters must be at least ten years old to benefit from this seminar which focuses on hair styles and make-up. This seminar is being sponsored by the City of Las Vegas. Call 229-6359.

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