

## Sex Specific Results Are Not Reported in Cardiology Trials

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**Background:** Mandates from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the United States stipulate the inclusion of women in funded studies and the analysis of study outcomes by sex, but women remain underrepresented in clinical trials and trial results are often not stratified by sex. We explored the extent to which sex specific results (SSR) appear in recently published cardiology studies.

**Methods:** All original adult cardiology clinical research articles published in Annals of Internal Medicine, Archives of Internal Medicine, Journal of the American Medical Association, New England Journal of Medicine, Journal of the American College of Cardiology, American Journal of Cardiology, and Circulation from July through December 2004 were reviewed. SSR were defined as the presentation of primary outcomes for women in a format allowing the data to be abstracted for use in a meta-analysis.

**Results:** Seventeen studies were excluded because they were appropriately single sex trials. Of the remaining 628 studies, only 153 (24%) provided SSR. Among NIH-sponsored research, 31 of 61 trials (51%) analyzed outcomes by sex compared to 22% of other trials.

**Conclusions:** Although the NIH policy requiring SSR has been in place for 15 years, only a small minority of current cardiology trials include sex-specific data. Sex differences remain poorly understood and explored and this deficiency limits our ability to provide optimal care for women. As NIH-funded research includes significantly more SSR, a similar mandate by journal editors that authors provide gender specific data may help to close this knowledge gap.