



American Academy of Nursing on Policy

A call to action: Expanded research agenda for women's health

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Recently, reports were released by the National Institutes of Health, Office of Research on Women's Health, and the Institute of Medicine suggesting women's health research agendas. These reports stimulated commentary from the American Academy of Nursing's Women's Health Expert Panel. This commentary identified the need for an expanded research agenda for women's health that was published in *Nursing Outlook* (Shaver, Olshansky, & Woods, 2013). The following call to action highlights the most critical areas that were not included in these reports.

The American Academy of Nursing identifies the following crucial research areas that need emphasis in women's health research agendas:

1. Expand the development and testing of sex-informed interventions that (a) are sensitive to flexible and inclusive self-definitions of sex and (b) account for the needs and preferences of women and men across the lifespan.
2. Focus attention on how sex interacts with other health determinants over the lifespan including ecosocial, life course, and intersectionality combined (including race/ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and physical and mental functionality).
3. Study preventive, therapeutic, biobehavioral, and holistic interventions for chronic conditions (e.g., obesity) that are holistic, incorporating nutrition, physical activity, evaluations or recognition of the social and physical environments, and evaluation/recognition and coping with stresses and strains of everyday living.
4. Study underemphasized conditions that disproportionately affect women including symptom clusters, autoimmune diseases, sexually transmitted infections, and stress-related disorders (e.g.,

fibromyalgia, functional gut disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, temporomandibular joint disorder, eating disorders, migraine headaches, and so on).

5. Implement studies that seek to understand the social and individual determinants of unintended pregnancies and promote methods to decrease the incidence.
6. Study how to prevent and treat consequences of violence against women and girls across the lifespan.
7. Study strategies that provide behavioral and functional support for women as they age and in their roles as caregivers.
8. Accelerate the testing of models that translate research findings directly to the public in all health care settings, including hospitals, health care agencies/clinics, homes, and communities.
9. Study how transitional life events such as child-bearing (both expected and unexpected), child-rearing, single motherhood, marriage, divorce, death, and caregiving impact women's health, income, and quality of life.
10. Investigate the extent to which the next generation of women's health researchers and providers are educated to meet the needs of men and women across the lifespan.

REFERENCE

- Shaver, J., Olshansky, E., & Woods, N. F. (2013). Women's health research agenda for the next decade. A report by the Women's Health Expert Panel of the American Academy of Nursing. *Nurs Outlook*, 61(1), 16–24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2012.05.009>.

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