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Title: **Death is Gendered**

Synopsis

The following data are pre-Covid and relate to England & Wales mostly in 2016 to 2019. Unless otherwise stated, data were compiled in Ref.[1] based on Refs.[3-8].

- [1] Male babies and boys under 10 are around 10% to 30% more likely to die than girls the same age, **Figure 1**.
- [2] Men are 78% more likely than women to die before age 45, **Figure 1**.
- [3] Men are 43% more likely than women to die before age 75, **Figure 1**.
- [4] The largest disparity between men's and women's deaths before age 75 is due to cardiovascular diseases, followed by cancers, digestive system diseases, suicide and respiratory diseases in that order.
- [5] Excluding the sex-specific cancers, more men die before 75 of every type of cancer, **Figure 2**.
- [6] Prostate cancer kills the same number of men as breast cancer kills women, but men with symptoms have no effective means of being reassured, and GP's surgeries often discourage PSA testing whilst offering nothing else.
- [7] For men, there is an intersectional effect of gender with socioeconomic disadvantage which increases the gender disparity in life expectancy for the less well off (Ref.[1], Section 3.1).
- [8] Deaths at work are ~97% of men, Refs.[9,10]. (However, in absolute numbers we have come a long way since the British coal mining industry alone was routinely killing over 1,000 men per year on average, Ref.[11]).
- [9] More than twice as many men as women are the victims of homicide. In 2019/20, 73% of homicides were of men, Ref.[12]
- [10] Rough sleepers are 88% men, and 88% of deaths of rough sleepers are men (687 men and 91 women in 2019, Ref.[13]).
- [11] In 2017 some 284 men died in prisons in England and Wales, 181 of them *not* self-inflicted. For women the numbers were 8 and 3 respectively (sources in Ref.[1] Section 8.6.2). The number of men dying in prison from "natural" causes has been increasing steeply, **Figures 3a,b**. In this context the reader should recall the sex-bias against men on imprisonment (separate submission).
- [12] Between 9% and 14% of UK armed service personnel are women (9% to 17% of officers), Ref.[14]. In the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, armed forces deaths were 97% and 99.3% men, Refs.[15,16].

Finally, men are about twice as likely as women to die from Covid-19, other things being equal.

Cultural / Policy Bias

- Undoubtedly there is a lifestyle contribution to men's excess premature deaths. However, contrary to cultural assumptions, the male is more fragile than the female as regards health, Ref.[2]. Biology also matters. This is evidenced also by the death rate for male babies and children under 10 being greater than that for girls the same age. Covid-19 provides a further example.
- The popular narrative is that men do not look after their health, and they do not seek medical help when they should, and so they bring disadvantage upon themselves through their destructive masculine characteristics.

- Actually, the evidence does not support the idea that men's delay in accessing health services is responsible for their adverse outcomes in the two key areas of cardiovascular diseases and cancers (see Ref.[1], Section 4.1).
- Whilst men do have fewer GP consultations than women on average, most of the difference is due to women's attendance for contraceptive, pregnancy, ante-natal, childcare and national screening purposes (there are few screening programmes for men). After accounting for those factors, what remains of the gender disparity in GPs' appointments is probably attributable to men being in full time work more often than women and hence finding access to GPs difficult, especially in manual occupations where they risk losing pay when taking time off for a medical appointment, Ref.[1], Section 4.1.
- It took 11 years of campaigning after routine HPV vaccination of girls to roll vaccination out also to boys, despite the burden of disease being the same for the two sexes. The argument based on herd immunity would never have been acceptable to anyone had the suggestion been to vaccinate boys only.
- The observation that more men than women are the victims of homicide is often met with the response that "ah, but it's men that do the killing". This is true, but such victim blaming betrays the mindset at work: it does not speak of compassion for the victim, but of an opportunity for disenfranchising men from empathy.

References

- [1] William Collins (2019) *The Empathy Gap*, Ips publishing, 2019.
- [2] Sebastian Kraemer (2000) *The Fragile Male* (2000), in The BMJ 2000;321:1609
- [3] [British Heart Foundation, 2018](#)
- [4] [Office for National Statistics, Death Data, 2017](#)
- [5] [Office for National Statistics, Violent Crime Data, 2017](#)
- [6] [Office for National Statistics, Alcohol Deaths, 2017](#)
- [7] [Office for National Statistics, Drug Deaths, 2017](#)
- [8] [Office for National Statistics, Suicide Data, 2017](#)
- [9] [Health and Safety Executive, Deaths at Work, 2017](#)
- [10] [Health and Safety Executive, Deaths at Work, 2014](#)
- [11] [Mining Institute, Mining Accidents, 2016](#)
- [12] ONS, [Homicide in England and Wales: year ending March 2020](#)
- [13] Rough sleeper deaths [Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)
- [14] [House of Commons Library, UK Forces Personnel, 2017](#)
- [15] [BBC News, Iraq War Deaths, 2016](#)
- [16] [BBC News, Afghanistan War Deaths, 2015](#)

Conclusions

When it comes to disadvantage, being dead is indisputably a case in point. And when it comes to dying, this is one area where male dominance remains unchallenged.

Recommendations

In common with the other male disadvantages, the main requirement is a change in mindset from "it's men's own fault" to an acknowledgement that men may suffer both natural disadvantages and societally imposed disadvantages.

Notes

Figure 1: Percentage Gender Gap in Deaths by Age Range (after Ref.[1], Fig..2)

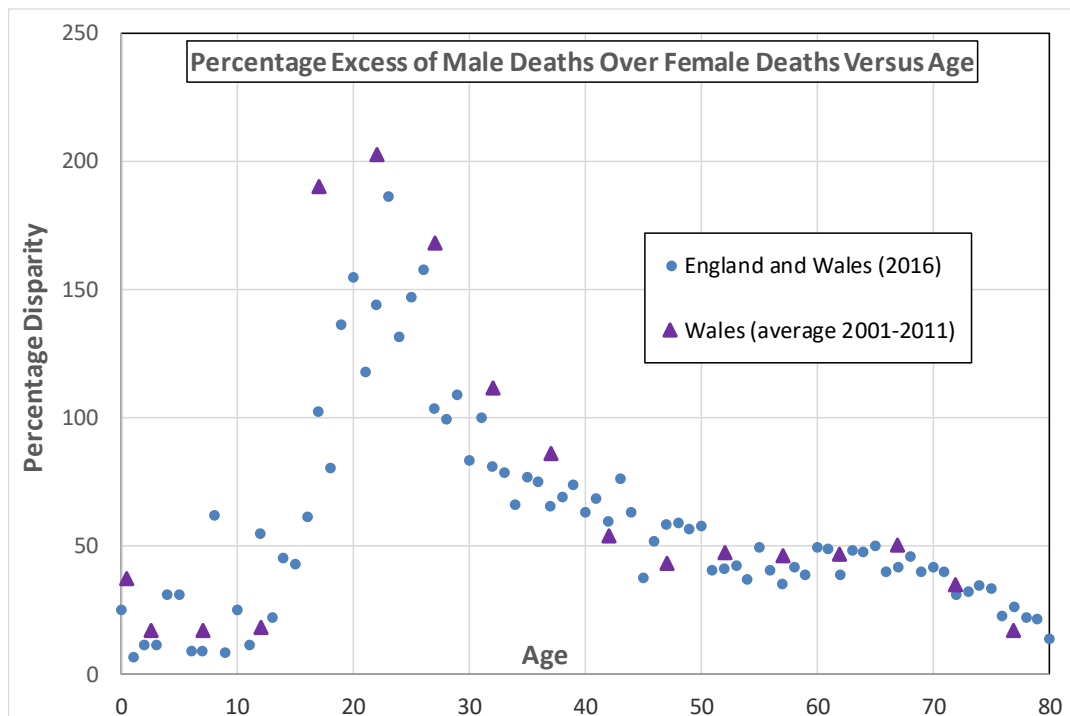


Figure 2: Ratio of Male to Female Premature Deaths from Specific Cancers (after Ref.[1], Fig.3.5)

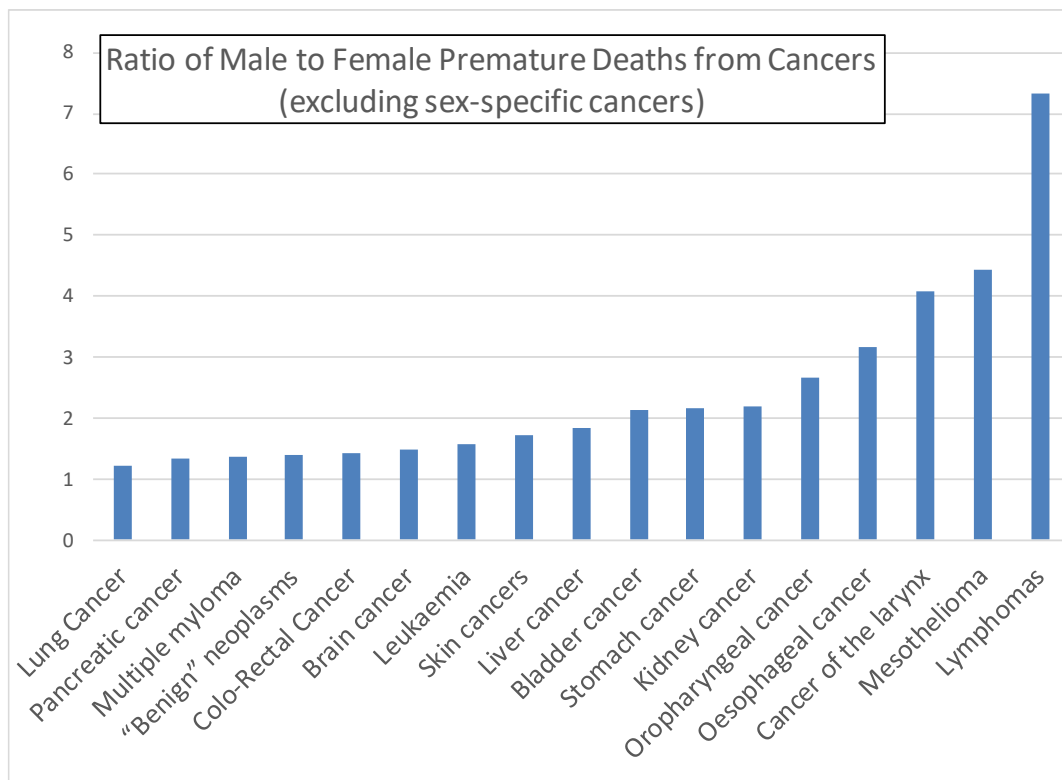


Figure 3a: Deaths of Men in Prison in England and Wales by Cause (after Ref.[1], Fig.8.16)

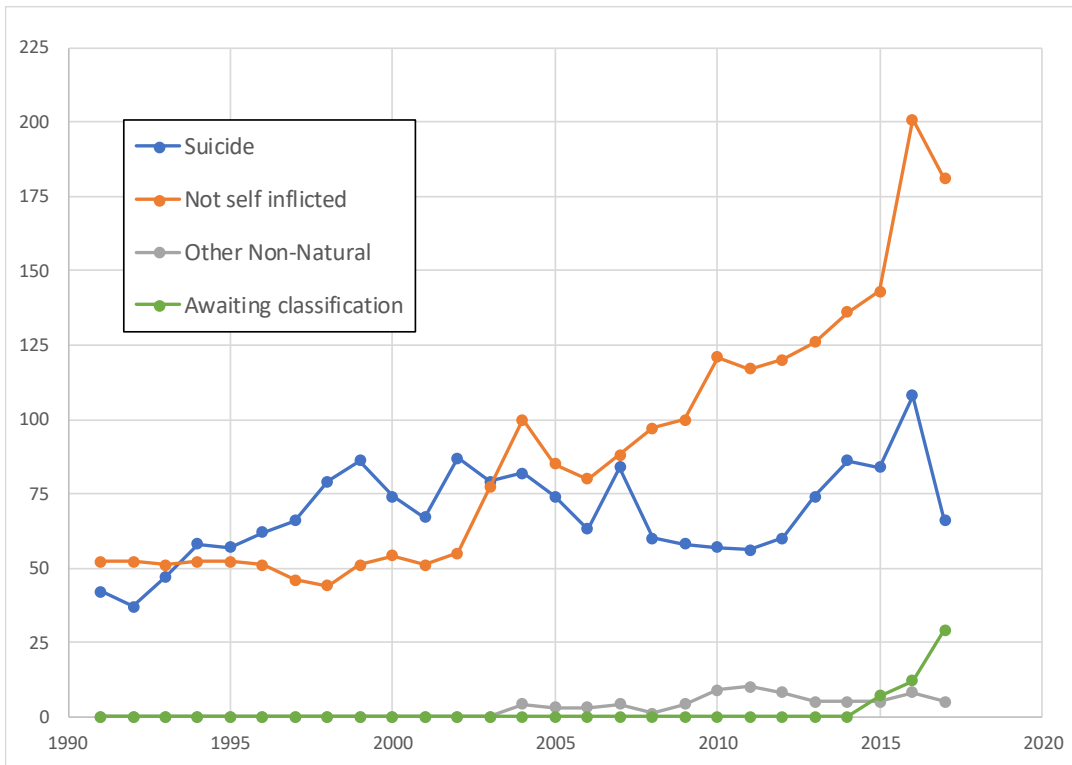


Figure 3b: Total Deaths of Men and Women in Prison in England and Wales (after Ref.[1], Fig.8.17)

