Syndrome 'X' – Reflection of an 'Endangered Gender'?

Dear Editor,

We read with interest the article on Syndrome 'X' by Bhalwar et al [1] and would like to congratulate the authors for an excellent study with pertinent observations pertaining to newer dimensions of health problems, with special reference to the male gender. The idea that men have specific health needs, experiences and concerns related to their gender as well as their biological sex is a relatively newer concept in comparison to 'women's health' [2].

Almost by default, the strong emphasis on women's issues, has revealed areas of men's health that require just as much attention. It is indeed a matter of grave concern that despite having most of the determinants of health in their favour, males have a higher mortality rate for all the 15 leading causes of death [3], with overall life expectancy being about seven years shorter than females [4].

Despite coronary heart disease being justifiably portrayed as a prototype of a male disease, men display a high degree of ignorance and avoidance of both conventional and "non conventional" risk factors associated with it. Coronary heart disease is the greatest cause of premature death in men, yet it is relatively unresearched from the prospective of men's health behaviour [5]. In this regard, the study by Bhalwar et al [1] is a landmark stepping stone for the cause of men's health, with special reference to a cross section of Indian population.

This has necessitated an urgent need to promote and advertise men's health in a positive way and support gender specific training of primary care workers [3]. Further, it has raised many contemporary, social and medical issues [6], like can something be done to improve men's life expectancy and are there effective and

morally acceptable strategies to modify men's negative behaviour towards themselves and others?

Hope that these questions trigger a strong movement in support of more focused and stronger research on men's health.

References

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Reply

Dear Sir,

I must thank the originators of the letter for their deep interest and words of encouragement. Indeed, a very interesting issue which is often overlooked has been pointed out. We do agree that men's

health problems are also important and should be given as much weightage in research as is being given to women's health.

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