

Gender Differences In Pain Assessment: A Daily Activities Perspective

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Abstract : Introduction Many patients are aware of the health benefits associated with an active lifestyle, but they are often hindered from engaging in physical activity due to the presence of pain. The majority of patients experience pain, which can fluctuate over time and is influenced by various factors, including gender. Gender differences in clinical pain and pain-related conditions are widely recognized. Existing literature strongly supports the notion that men and women exhibit distinct responses to pain. Previous studies conducted in Taiwan have highlighted gender differences in pain assessment, but only a limited number of studies have investigated the gender-related factors that influence pain during daily activities. The objective of this study was to examine gender differences in pain assessment among inpatients in Taiwan and investigate whether gender and surgical procedures are factors that impact the daily activities of pain. Method In this study, a prospective and structured questionnaire survey method was utilized, employing intentional sampling to gather data from inpatients admitted to a medical center in central Taiwan. The research period covered in this study is from October 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. In this study, participants who were hospitalized within 48 hours were requested to self-assess their pain using the Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) and indicate the impact of pain on their activities. The data were analyzed to explore the potential influence of gender and surgical procedures on daily activities affected by pain. Result A total of 722 cases were included in the study, with the mean age of the subjects is 54.38 years old (SD=16.3), and the range varied from 18 to 93 years old. Among the subjects, 48.23% (n=348) were male, and 62.3% (n=450) of them had received more than 12 years of education., and 56.9% (n=411) underwent surgery. The results indicated that regardless of whether the participants underwent surgery or not, females experienced higher perceived severe pain intensity than males ($t=2.248$, $P < .05$). However, in surgical patients, there was no significant difference in gender ($t=1.75$, $P > .05$). Regarding the impact of pain on daily activities when pain intensity reached 7, male subjects experienced a 5-point effect on their daily activities (AUC=0.84, 95% CI 0.79-0.89, $P < 0.01$), while female subjects experienced a 7-point effect (AUC=0.88, 95% CI 0.80-0.87, $P < 0.01$). Discussion Some studies suggest that women experience painful stimuli as more intense than men, this difference has been observed in various types of experimental pain, including mechanical and thermal stimuli. Our study reached the same conclusion, female patients exhibited greater intensity of pain. According to the research findings, The research findings highlight the significant impact of gender on individuals' response to intense pain (NRS>7) during their daily activities, with men showing a higher pain tolerance. The higher pain tolerance often observed in men may be attributed to societal conditioning, which encourages them to conceal outward expressions of pain. Further research in this area could help provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic in Taiwan.

Keywords : pain assessment, gender, surgery, activities of daily living

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