

How men and women differ on their view of Alzheimer's care

In Paris at the 2011 Alzheimer's Association International Conference, the results of a survey were presented providing indications of how men and women differ in their approach to Alzheimer's. The International survey included the countries of Spain, France, Poland, Germany and the United States.

Women and men differed in the following ways –

- Women had a greater concern than men for loved ones developing Alzheimer's.
- Women were more likely to express their own fear of developing Alzheimer's before other illnesses.
- Women were more likely than men to be involved in the daily Alzheimer's care in each of the countries. (Women in Poland had a 10% higher involvement.)
- Men expressed greater certainty that if they developed Alzheimer's it would be their wife who would take care of them (Spanish men held the highest belief).
- Women, on the other hand, believed if they developed Alzheimer's they would rely on a child or caregiver.
- Women in Poland and Spain, when compared to the remaining countries, were more involved in financial support and decision-making of Alzheimer's care.
- Women also indicated that governments needed to increase spending budgets for Alzheimer's research.

A greater need for Alzheimer's research funds is also supported by **The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything**. Maria Shriver is a child of an Alzheimer's parent. Her political, journalistic and social activism has culminated in The Shriver Report which addresses not only the burgeoning

Alzheimer's epidemic but also its disproportional affects on women.

The following statistics confirm the concern for women.

1. women represent 65% of the Alzheimer's population
2. **6.7 million** women are caregivers to a friend or loved one
3. **33%** of women caregivers provide service on a 24/7 basis
4. **66%** of women caregivers work at jobs where they arrive late, have to leave early or need to take time off
5. **almost 50%** of women caregivers suffer from elevated levels of both physical and emotional stress

The Internal survey and The Shriver Report certainly indicate that **women are playing a significant role as Alzheimer's caregivers**, many times with very little choice.

Along with our International economic challenges now and in the future, greater burdens will continue to be placed on women.

It's time to start a significant dialogue on how we are going to cope with the demands that Alzheimer's is going to place on us.