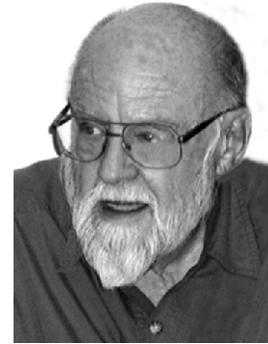


Editorial

Finally—No Gender Difference!



For me, one of the most discouraging things about getting older is the discovery that, in a number of areas, men seem to age less well than women. In addition to well-known differences in high-frequency audiometric thresholds, and the ability to understand speech in noisy backgrounds, there is a seemingly unending stream of findings that men age differently than women in a host of other dimensions. To cite just a few, men have higher mortality rates and shorter life spans than women. Elderly men do less well than elderly women on some verbal fluency tasks. Atrophy of the left hemisphere of the brain is greater in men than in women, especially in Alzheimer's disease. Among schizophrenics, men show an earlier age of onset, poorer functional outcome, and greater negative symptoms than women. As men age, there is a systematic loss of heart volume, whereas in women heart volume is preserved. Men develop hypertension earlier than women and suffer a greater incidence of chronic renal disease; in cases of surgical sepsis, men have a poorer prognosis than women. Cardiovascular events are more likely in men than in women. Elderly men tend to have lower levels of memory functioning than elderly women. And, finally, men are more likely to acquire Parkinson's disease than women.

It is with a sigh of relief, therefore, that I commend to your attention the paper by Nancy Tye-Murray, Mitchell Sommers, and Brent Spehar, entitled "The Effects of Age and Gender on Lipreading Abilities" in this issue of *JAAA*. In a study of 122 adults across the age range of 18 to 80 years, they found that while elderly persons did less well than young adults in the lipreading of (1) consonants in a vocalic environment, (2) words in a carrier phrase, and (3) meaningful sentences, the scores of elderly women were not

significantly better than the scores of elderly men. The authors conclude that, in audiological rehabilitation programs for seniors, the approach to lipreading intervention and the content of lipreading materials need not be gender-specific.

In a subsequent editorial I will summarize areas in which elderly men surpass elderly women. I will commence work on this as soon as I can get my wife to help me find my reading glasses.

James Jerger
Editor-in-Chief