

Introduction

Women's mental health: current issues and controversies

Saúde mental da mulher: questões e controvérsias atuais

Much has been learned about female-specific psychiatric disturbances since Hippocrates's disciples described, in a treatise titled *The Sickness of Virgins*, a range of behavioral changes including delusions, hallucinations and suicidal thoughts, supposedly attributed to "retained menstrual blood". Many centuries afterwards, Maudsley pointed out the possibility of ovarian failure being associated with behavioral changes in aging women, with his definition of *climacteric melancholia*.

Much has yet to be learned or fully understood though. In the 21st century, epidemiologic surveys show that depression now is one of the top three causes of disease burden among females, leading to a significant negative impact on women's quality of life and social functioning. Yet, there is a paucity of consistent data on gender differences with respect to treatment outcomes, or on the association between sex hormones and psychiatric disturbances.

I am thrilled that the Editors of the *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria* acknowledged the need for increasing awareness of women's mental health issues by supporting this supplement. We have chosen the theme *Women's mental health: current issues and controversies* and were fortunate to gather an excellent team of clinicians and investigators to collaborate with us. In this supplement, the readers will find updated reviews on gender differences in anxiety (by Kinrys & Wygant), domestic violence, trauma and addiction (by Zilberman & Blume), postpartum depression (by Zinga et al), and reproductive-cycle related trauma (by Born et al). Lastly Rennó et al report on some current challenges and perspectives in research in women's mental health in Brazil.

We hope this supplement will serve as 'food for thought' for clinicians and health professionals, and inspire more colleagues to dedicate their clinical and research time to this important but understudied field.

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