

Abstract

It is generally accepted that, on average, women live longer than men. Few, however, are aware that there is an underlying and consistent pattern of factors contributing to the sex mortality differential. This paper attempts to synthesize the evidence supporting and refuting the hypotheses for the sex mortality differential. The extent of the sex mortality differential is examined. It has existed since at least 1750 and occurs at all age groups—even prenatally—in nearly all an-

imal species studied and for almost every major cause of death. Evidence supports both the biological/genetic and the social/cultural/environmental/behavioral schools of hypotheses, as well as interactions between the two, but the determining component may revolve around the differing chromosomes and hormones between the sexes. Behavioral distinctions, especially cigarette smoking, also affect the sex mortality differential.

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Barbara Blatt Kalben, F.S.A., E.A., M.A.A.A., is Consulting Actuary, Northwest Plan Services, 4700 42nd Ave., S.W., Suite 520, Seattle, WA 98116, e-mail: bkalben@msn.com.

(note: The quotations appearing in this monograph are exact, except where capitalization and punctuation were changed in keeping with modern style and grammar guidelines.)

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Barbara Blatt Kalben

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475 N. Martingale Road, Suite 800
Schaumburg, Illinois 60173
