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Myocardial Infarction in Women versus Men

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Pathophysiology and its Significance

Introduction

As a future advance practice nurse (APN), it is important to recognize the symptoms of myocardial infarction (MI) and provide prompt treatment to patients to reduce morbidity and mortality. The worldwide leading cause of death is cardiovascular disease (CVD). In 2008, coronary heart disease (CHD) was the cause of 7.3 million deaths, while cerebrovascular disease was responsible for 6.2 million deaths. Since cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for both women and men, it is imperative for nurses to learn about the risk factors and signs of MI.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the pathophysiology of MI and its symptoms. Some studies have focused on the risk factors associated with MI, while others have examined the signs and symptoms of MI.

Unique Signs and Symptoms Women versus Men

Men

- Atypical symptoms accompany MI in women.
- In women, MI may be more likely to cause less severe symptoms, which can delay diagnosis.
- Women are more likely to report nausea and vomiting, whereas men are more likely to report chest pain or discomfort.
- Women may experience dyspnea (shortness of breath) and weakness, while men may experience pain, cold sweats, and nausea.
- Women may experience symptoms for a longer period of time compared to men.
- Women are usually more likely to present with symptoms of MI at a younger age than men.

Women

- Women are more likely to report chest pain that is localized to the left arm, neck, or jaw.
- Women are more likely to report shortness of breath, nausea, and vomiting.
- Women are more likely to report symptoms of MI within 12 hours of onset.
- Women are more likely to report symptoms of MI that are not associated with exertion.
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Implications

- Understanding the differences in the symptoms of MI between men and women is crucial for early diagnosis and prompt treatment.
- Early recognition of symptoms and prompt treatment can significantly improve outcomes for both men and women.
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References

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http://coxmcgis.cox.net/erewiki/wikipedia/wp/en/Myocardial_Infarction_in_Women_versus_Men