



Press release

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Women have more health problems despite healthier life style

According to the latest figures by Statistics Netherlands women have more health complaints than men. They make more use of the health services and are less positive about their own health than men. Still, compared to men, women have a healthier life style because they smoke less, drink less alcohol, are less frequently overweight, and are sufficiently physically active.

Women feel less positive about their own health

In 2002 about eight in ten Dutch people stated that their health was good or very good. Their share has been stable since 1985. The percentage of women who were positive about their own health has always been lower during this period than that of men.

Women have more general complaints

About four people in ten complain of fatigue, aching muscles and joints. Other general complaints such as headaches, backaches and insomnia occurred a little less often.

Women had more general complaints than men. Women suffered twice as often from insomnia and 1.5 times as often from headaches, fatigue, and backaches.

..... and more infections

Colds, flue, laryngitis, and sinusitis were the most common infections in 2002. Four in ten people had them within a two-month period. These infections occurred slightly more among women than among men. Furthermore there was a relatively great difference between women and men in the number of infections of the kidneys, bladder and urinary tract. Some 6 percent of all women had such infections versus 1 percent of the men. Also, twice as many women vomited.

..... and more depressions

In 2002 one in ten people over the age of twelve suffered a period of depression of at least two weeks. One in eight suffered periods of anxiety. Twice as many women went through periods of depression and anxiety than

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men.

Women made more use of health care

Three quarters of all people went to their GP at least once in 2002. Almost four in ten visited a specialist. Women made more use of both types of health care than men, as was the case in previous years. The figures have been the same since the nineties.

About eight in ten people visited the dentist in 2002. Women went to the dentist more often than men, as was the case in previous years.

Women have healthier life styles

In 2002 one third of the population over twelve smoked, and eight in ten sometimes drank alcohol. Almost half did not meet the Dutch criteria for healthy activity levels, and 45 out of 100 adults were overweighed.

Women are doing better than men in this respect. The percentage of smokers among women was lower than for men, as was the percentage of heavy smokers. The greater number of non-drinking women indicates their drinking behaviour is healthier. This is confirmed by the fact that the number of heavy drinkers among women is four times lower than among men.

The positive picture is completed by the greater share of women who are physically active and the lower share over overweight women. Only the slightly greater share of serious overweight does not match the image of the healthier life style women have.
