

Gender Inequalities in ADL-dependence: A Two-Cohort Follow-up of Octogenarians

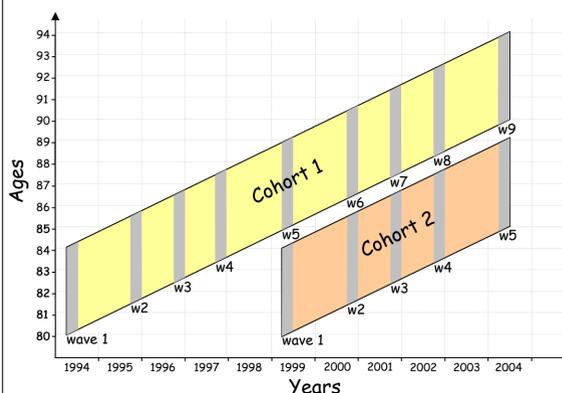
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Objectives

- Considering ADL-dependence,
- 1) We check the accuracy of the gender paradox "Women live longer but are sicker" (cf. Lahelma et al. 1999) in advanced old age,
 - 2) We investigate whether a) social disadvantages and/or b) duration of ADL-dependence prior to death offer elements to explain the gender paradox



Sample



- ❖ SWILSO-O is a two-cohort study on aging in Switzerland ($n_1=340, n_2=377$)
- ❖ Sample was stratified by gender and geographical area (urban and semi-rural) and composed of community-dwelling participants at baseline
- ❖ Participants aged 80-84 at baseline were interviewed up to 9 times over 10 years (cohort 1), up to 5 times over 5 years (cohort 2)
- ❖ 362 (50%) of the respondents died, 123 (17%) dropped out the study during the study period

Method

Gender differences were assessed on:

- ❖ ADL-dependence (inability to perform alone at least one of the five ADL activities), using multi-level analysis, $n=717$
- ❖ Severity of ADL-dependence (average of the 5 responses :0=able, 1=able with difficulty, 2=unable), using multi-level analysis, $n=717$
- ❖ Duration of ADL-dependence prior to death, using Poisson regression, $n=362$ decedents

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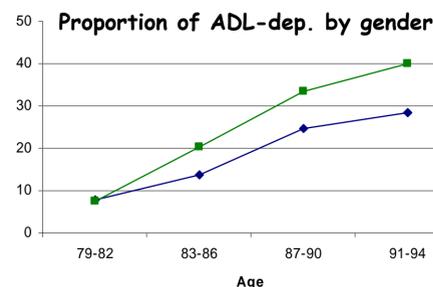
Results

The gender paradox

"Women live longer" ...

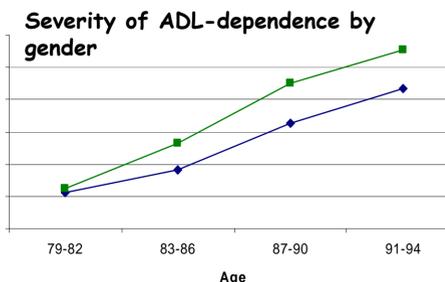
	Women	Men
% deceased	44.3	56.7
Mean age at death	86.7	85.7

... "but are sicker"

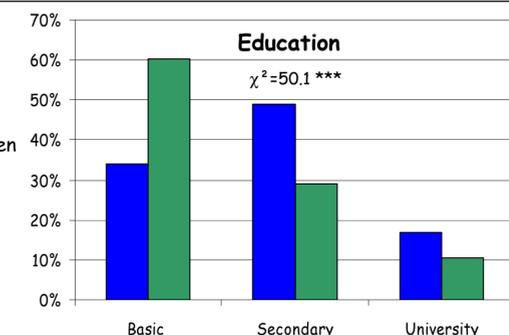
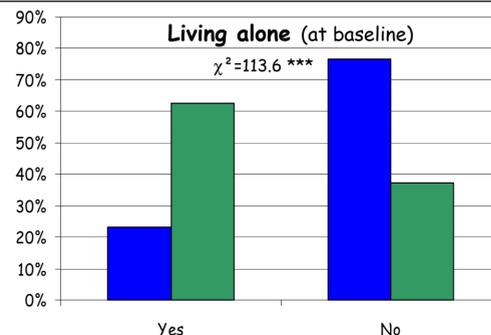


Women live longer but tend to have higher risk of ADL-dependence and more severe incapacities than men (at same age)!

At baseline, the gender difference in risk of ADL-dependence is NS (due to the exclusion at baseline of nursing home residents).
1analyses performed with multi-level models



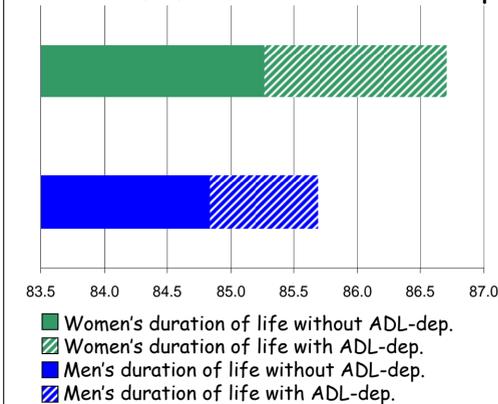
Combination of social disadvantages in women



Women are clearly more likely than men to face old age living alone and to have lower education; 35% of women (*resp.* 8% of men) combine both disadvantages. Women have also lower social status and lower income than men. It illustrates the « Multiple jeopardy » of older women in advanced old age.

Gender and social differences in duration of ADL-dep.

Duration of life with and without ADL-dep



Two-step Poisson regression

	(Step 1) IRR	(Step 2) IRR
Women vs men	1.68***	1.38***
Secondary school vs basic		0.79***
University vs basic		0.66***
Middle/upper vs working class		0.54***
Employee vs working class		0.73***
Self-employee vs working class		1.56***
Living alone		0.82***
Age at death		1.16***

The duration of ADL-dependence is longer in women, even at same age at death. Adjustment for social factors diminished gender differences in duration of ADL-dependence.

Women better survive from their ADL-dependence compared to men while higher mortality among men rescues many of them from experiencing long periods of ADL-dependence.

Conclusions

Longer periods of ADL-dependence in women as well their social disadvantages contribute to explain gender gap in ADL-dependence prevalence.

During very old age and the last stages of life, women suffered from strong inequalities (social disadvantages combined with longer period of ADL-dependence), which may be the strongest in their entire life course.

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