



The **Women's Health Council**
Comhairle Shláinte na mBan



18th February 2009

IAEM and WHC announce the publication of “*The Emergency Department Assessment of Women with Acute Coronary Syndrome*”

Women in Ireland may underestimate their risk of developing heart disease or of suffering a heart attack. Heart disease is often falsely perceived to be a “male” disease. In her lifetime, a woman is much more likely to develop coronary heart disease than breast cancer. The death rate from heart disease among Irish women is higher than the rates for women in most other European countries. International research has shown that women often have less obvious symptoms of heart disease and may receive lower standards of treatment compared to men.

The Women's Health Council (www.whc.ie) has been working to increase awareness of heart disease risks among Irish women and has collaborated with the Irish Association for Emergency Medicine to ensure that women who present to Emergency Departments (EDs) with symptoms suggestive of acute heart disease receive the best possible care. The organisations have jointly produced “*The Emergency Department Assessment of Women with Acute Coronary Syndrome*” document, to increase awareness among Emergency Medicine healthcare professionals of issues relating to women and heart disease. This document highlights the spectrum of women's presenting symptoms and outlines current best practice guidelines for the ED management of women with Acute Coronary Syndrome. The document will be circulated to all Irish EDs, with the aim to encourage ED doctors and nurses to:

- Appreciate the true prevalence of heart disease among the female population in Ireland.

President:

Mr. Fergal Hickey FRCS, FRCSEd, DA(UK), FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine

Sligo General Hospital
The Mall
Sligo
Ireland

Tel No: +353 71 9174505
Fax No: +353 71 9174646

Secretary:

Mr. James Binchy FRCSEd, Dip.Med.Tox., FCEM.
Consultant in Emergency Medicine,

University College Hospital
Newcastle Road,
Galway,
Ireland

Tel No: +353 91 542 766
Fax No: +353 91 520 154

Treasurer:

Mr. Niall O'Connor DCH, DOBs, MRCP, FRCSEd, FCEM
Consultant in Emergency Medicine

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital
Drogheda
Co. Louth
Ireland

Tel No: +353 41 9874791
Fax No: +353 41 9874799

- Become more aware of the broad range of symptoms which can be associated with heart disease in women.
- Ensure that there is no gender disadvantage in the assessment, investigation and emergency treatment of patients with heart disease in Irish EDs and that all patients with heart disease receive the best possible standards of care.
- Increase awareness of heart disease among their female patients and encourage them to reduce their heart disease risks.

The Women's Health Council in conjunction with the Quality in Practice Committee of the Irish College of General Practitioners has previously produced guidelines for the assessment and management of cardiovascular disease in women in Primary Care entitled "*Cardiovascular Disease in Women (ICGP Quality in Practice Committee) – a resource for GPs, covering risk assessment, clinical management and investigations*". This is available at http://whc.ie/documents/40_ICGP_CD.pdf. Further information relating to women and heart disease is available from the Irish Heart Foundation. http://www.irishheart.ie/iopen24/pub/magazines/a_womans_heart.pdf