**Name of Journal: *World Journal of Psychiatry***

**ESPS Manuscript NO: 22223**

**Manuscript Type: Review**

**Sex differences in cognitive impairment in Alzheimer’s disease**

Laws KR *et al.* Sex differences in Alzheimer’s disease

**Keith R Laws, Karen Irvine, Tim M Gale**

**Keith R Laws, Karen Irvine, Tim M Gale,** School of Life and Medical Sciences, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 9AB, United Kingdom

**Karen Irvine, Tim M Gale,** Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, Mental Health Unit, QEII Hospital, Howlands, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 4HQ, United Kingdom

**Author contributions:** All authors contributed to this paper and approved the final manuscript.

**Conflict-of-interest** **statement:** The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**Open-Access:** This article is an open-access article which was selected by an in-house editor and fully peer-reviewed by external reviewers. It is distributed in accordance with the Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial (CC BY-NC 4.0) license, which permits others to distribute, remix, adapt, build upon this work non-commercially, and license their derivative works on different terms, provided the original work is properly cited and the use is non-commercial. See: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

**Correspondence to: Keith R Laws, PhD (CANTAB), Professor,** School of Life and Medical Sciences, University of Hertfordshire, College Lane, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 9AB, United Kingdom. k.laws@herts.ac.uk

**Telephone:** +44-1707-281137

**Received:** August 20, 2015

**Peer-review started:** August 22, 2015

**First decision:** October 30, 2015

**Revised:** December 21, 2015

**Accepted:** January 21, 2016

**Article in press:**

**Published online:**

**Abstract**

Sex differences in neurocognitive abilities have been extensively explored both in the healthy population and in many disorders. Until recently, however, little work has examined such differences in people with Alzheimer’s disease (AD). This is despite clear evidence that AD is more prevalent in women, and converging lines of evidence from brain imaging, post-mortem analyses, hormone therapy and genetics suggesting that AD affects men and women differently. We provide an overview of evidence attesting to the poorer cognitive profiles in women than in men at the same stage of AD. Indeed, men significantly outperform women in several cognitive domains, including: Language and semantic abilities, visuospatial abilities and episodic memory. These differences do not appear to be attributable to any differences in age, education, or dementia severity. Reasons posited for this female disadvantage include a reduction of estrogen in postmenopausal women, greater cognitive reserve in men, and the influence of the apolipoprotein E ε4 allele. Assessment of cognitive abilities contributes to the diagnosis of the condition and thus, it is crucial to identify the role of sex differences if potentially more accurate diagnoses and treatments are to emerge.

**Key words:** Dementia; Gender; Sex differences; Cognition

**© The Author(s) 2016.** Published by Baishideng Publishing Group Inc. All rights reserved.

**Core tip:** This review assesses evidence that women with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) show greater cognitive impairment than men. The evidence shows that female AD patients are outperformed by males in multiple cognitive domains including visuospatial, verbal processing, semantic and episodic memory. This disadvantage is not attributable to sex differences in age, education level, or dementia severity. Possible explanations include estrogen loss in women or a greater cognitive reserve in men, which may provide protection against the disease process. Such findings have implications for tailoring more specific gender-based treatments.

Laws KR, Irvine K, Gale TM. Sex differences in cognitive impairment in Alzheimer’s disease. *World J Psychiatr* 2016; In press

“Biomedical research in general, and neuroscience in particular, has been built on a false assumption…that one may safely ignore potential sex influences”[1].

Alzheimer’s disease (AD) is the most common neurodegenerative disease associated with aging, with worldwide estimates of 30 million people with dementia, 4.6 million new cases annually, and one new case every 7 seconds[2]. The prevalence and the incidence of AD are greater amongst women than men and this discrepancy increases with advanced age[3-5].

A meta-analysis of 13 population studies from across United States, Europe, and Asia indicates that women are at significantly greater risk of developing AD, though not other dementias[6]. The neurocognitive profiles of male and female AD patients, however, are less well-described. These profiles require far greater examination as sex differences in the pattern of cognitive decline may yield vital information about differential risk factors, pathogenesis and most importantly, treatment of AD in men and women. In order to make sense of any sex differences that emerge under AD neuropathology, we first need to have a clear understanding of those sex differences that may already exist in the normal population, and specifically the healthy elderly population.

**SEX DIFFERENCES IN THE GENERAL POPULATION**

Sex differences in cognitive abilities receive consistent, extensive discussion in the “normal” literature, with the prevailing view being that women tend to have better verbal abilities[7,8], while men display a visuospatial advantage[8,9].

**VERBAL ABILITIES**

Tasks measuring verbal ability generally rely on rapid access to semantic and phonological information. Category fluency requires a person to name as many exemplars of a category (*e.g.*, tools) as possible, usually within one minute, while lexical fluency involves listing as many words beginning with a given letter (typically, F, A and S). In confrontation naming, the respondent must produce names for a series of visually presented items, usually but not exclusively line drawings. This task is regarded as a measure of core semantic memory function, though performance depends also on visual acuity and retrieval of phonological information.

In their meta-analysis of sex differences in almost 1.5 million participants, Hyde and Linn[7] found a small, but reliable female advantage in verbal ability with a *Cohen’s d* = 0.11 (Cohen’s *d* is calculated from: Mean of group A – Mean of group B/pooled standard deviation of A and B); and effect sizes are traditionally viewed as *small* (*d* = 0.2), medium (*d* = 0.5) or large (*d* = 0.7+). The small effect size reflects the mixed findings, with 44 studies (27%) reporting females outperformed males, 109 (66%) found no significant difference, and in 12 (7%) males outperformed females. Recent evidence suggests that sex differences in verbal ability are not universal but task-dependent. For lexical fluency, a female advantage has emerged in some studies[10,11], but not others[12,13]. Category fluency tasks do not elicit reliable sex differences[14] although differences may emerge for specific categories; for example, a female advantage for fruits and a male advantage for tools[15]. Confrontation naming, by contrast, has shown a male advantage in the few published papers examining sex differences[16]. In summary, sex differences in verbal abilities in the general population may be smaller than once believed[17].

**VISUOSPATIAL ABILITIES**

Linn and Petersen[18] partitioned visuospatial tasks into three groups: Mental rotation, spatial perception (spatial working memory) and spatial visualisation (navigation)*.* Mental rotation involves the ability to mentally rotate a two or three-dimensional figure rapidly and accurately. Spatial perceptiontasks are those where participants are required to determine spatial relationships with respect to the orientation of their own bodies in spite of distracting information. Spatial visualisation involves complicated multi-stage manipulations of spatially presented information (*e.g.*, the embedded figures test).

Sex differences in normative visuospatial processing are more robust than those documented for verbal processing. Voyer *et al*[9] meta-analysed 286 studies spanning 50 years, finding that men significantly outperformed women on most visuospatial tasks. Within Cohen’s[19] nomenclature, the effect sizes were large for mental rotation (*d* = 0.73), medium for spatial perception (*d* = 0.44), and small for spatial visualization (*d* = 0.13). A later review by Li and Singh[20] examined 16 studies comparing men and women on spatial rotation and 11 on spatial navigation, and all 27 pointed to a male advantage.

**AGE RELATED COGNITIVE DECLINE**

As expected, many aspects of cognitive performance do decline with age[21-24]. Although not typically apparent for category fluency[25] and spatial perception[26], age-related deficits are seen in lexical fluency[27] and block design tasks[28] - underscoring how the precise requirements of the verbal and spatial tasks are crucial.

Greater age-related cognitive decline in healthy men than women has been established not only in cross-sectional studies, but also crucially in longitudinal studies[29-34]. For example, Wiederholt *et al*[33] assessed 1692 participants aged 55-94 years finding that performance on all cognitive tests decreased progressively with age, but that the decline was slower in women. More recently, using internet testing, Maylor *et al*[23] examined sex differences and age-by-sex differences on various cognitive tasks in a very large sample of healthy individuals (109612 men and 88509 women). Importantly, and consistent with other studies, men showed greater age-related decline than women, irrespective of whether the task was one on which they were better. Of course, such large samples are sufficiently powered to detect even the most trivial differences and although the age by gender interactions described in this studyare highly significant, they account for just 0.1% of the variance in cognitive performance.

As part of the Whitehall II cohort study, Singh-Manoux *et al*[35] assessed 5198 male, and 2192 female, civil servants, aged 45-70, monitoring their cognitive performance (memory, vocabulary, reasoning and verbal fluency) over 10-years. Their results suggest that cognitive performance may decline earlier than previously thought. For example, reasoning scores decreased by 3.6% for men and women aged 45-49, and 9.6% and 7.4% respectively for those aged 65-70. The authors also noted the much larger cross-sectional than longitudinal age-related decline in women, which they attributed to cohort differences in education, with older women tending to be less well educated.

Based on neurocognitive and behavioural data, some have proposed that “age is kinder to women”[36]; however, any such female advantages are quite small and contentious. Meinz and Salthouse[36] meta-analysed 25 studies (5201 individuals aged 18-64) investigating sex differences in the patterns of age-cognition relations across a wide range of tasks. They concluded that “large (12%-25% of the total variance) effects related to age, small (at most 3% of the variance) effects associated with gender, and small to non-existent (less than 1%) effects associated with interactions of age and gender on measures of cognitive performance” (p 63). Only a minority of measures (speed and reasoning) revealed significant age by sex interactions: Men had smaller age-related declines. Although the age-related differences across sex were quite small, favouring women (only spatial abilities demonstrated a large sex gap favouring men), the confidence intervals for estimated effect sizes were small, suggesting the results are reliable.

Other research, however, suggests that men and women decline at similar rates[22,27,37,38]. Gerstorf *et al*[22] examined 368 participants aged 70-100 over a 13-year period, finding that for all cognitive tests men and women declined in parallel. Proust Lima *et al*[38]however, found that after adjusting for vascular status, sex differences in cognitive decline did emerge, but only at the oldest age, with women showing a steeper decline than men do. Similarly, in a sample of 647 twin pairs (both dizygotic and monozygotic) aged between 65 and 98 years, Read *et al*[24] described larger sex differences in working memory and perceptual speed deficits at later ages, with women faring worse.

Therefore, although age-related cognitive decline is evident on many tasks, the weight of evidence points to similar levels of impact in men and women until the very oldest age, when women suffer a faster decline. We might then expect to find that sex differences in the younger population persist in the elderly. Furthermore, any sex effects in AD patients that differ from that seen in the healthy population are likely to be due to the disease process rather than aging *per se*.

**SEX DIFFERENCES IN THE ELDERLY**

Research suggests that typical sex differences in cognitive performance may persist into old age, with better visuospatial and language skills in males and females respectively[11,23].

**VERBAL ABILITIES**

The pattern of sex differences in category fluency of the healthy elderly is far from consistent, with some finding a female advantage[11,39-44], others no sex differences at all[22,25,45-48] and at least one report of a male advantage[33]. The presence of an effect may depend upon the specific category examined, with reports of both a female advantage and an absence of sex differences[49] or both a female advantage and a male advantage[41] or all three possibilities depending upon the specific semantic category examined[15].

A picture naming advantage in elderly males has been documented[16,50-53] mirroring the advantage often seen in young adults, although not in all studies of the elderly[16,39,43-46,54-59]. In a longitudinal study by Connor *et al*[16], the rate of decline in naming was comparable for men and women.

**VISUOSPATIAL ABILITIES**

Corresponding to the findings in the healthy young, elderly men outperform elderly women on mental rotation[60] and spatial perception tasks[39]. For spatial visualisation tasks, the findings are variable and task-specific. A male advantage was reported by some[11,24] although equivalent male and female performance was observed by others including on the block design task[11] and figure copying[39], mirroring the conflicting patterns seen in the young.

**MEMORY**

Little evidence supports an unambiguous sex difference in memory function for the healthy elderly. Some report women being better at immediate word learning[47], verbal memory and episodic memory[22], while others have found no sex differences in verbal memory[61] or for delayed word learning[47,50]. Some evidence also documents that elderly men have better visual memory[38], working memory and episodic memory[24]. In summary, sex-differences in the memory ability of the healthy elderly where described, appear to be significantly dependent upon the specific task.

We have reviewed the evidence for sex and age-related differences in cognitive tasks within the normal population and principally within the healthy elderly population. It is important to have a clear understanding of such patterns, and the extent to which they are well-replicated, if we are to make sense of any sex differences in cognitive abilities that may emerge after the onset of AD.

### **VERBAL ABILITIES IN AD**

Semantic memory impairments emerge early in AD neuropathology[62]. Category fluency deficits may be apparent as much as five years prior to diagnosis[63] and mild AD patients are more impaired than those with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and elderly controls on category fluency[64,65]. Two meta-analyses[66,67] have highlighted large significant category fluency deficits in people with AD compared to healthy elderly controls, with Laws *et al*[67] calculating an extremely large effect size in 92 studies (*d* = 2.10).

The pattern with regard to lexical fluency deficits, however, is more varied with some finding no impairment[68,69], but others a worsening of performance[70]. Nonetheless, meta-analytic studies[66,67] confirm a reliable AD deficit in lexical fluency, with[67] estimating a large effect size (*d* = 1.46).

Compared to the healthy elderly, AD patients also have far greater difficulties on confrontation naming tasks[64,69,71-75]. A meta-analysis of 56 naming studies assessing 2607 AD patients and 2285 healthy controls by Laws *et al*[67] obtained a large effect size deficit in AD patients (*d* = 1.54).

**SEX DIFFERENCES IN VERBAL ABILITIES IN AD**

While AD is characterised by decline in the verbal and semantic domains, does any evidence suggest that the relative performance of men and women differs from the pattern in the healthy elderly? A search of the literature reveals a modest number of relevant studies (Table 1).

Several studies in the 1990s reported that, compared to men with equivalent AD severity, women manifest a more profound impairment of semantic memory[46,76-78]. In particular, female AD patients name fewer items correctly in confrontation naming tasks[46,55,77,78]. Others have reported higher naming scores by men, but no significant sex differences[45,79].Crucially, the significant sex differences in AD patients remain after controlling for the effects of age, education, and duration of illness[46,55,76,78]. In their meta-analysis, Laws *et al*[67] confirmed a male naming advantage by showing larger effect sizes in studies containing a greater proportion of female AD patients.

Several studies have reported no sex differences in lexical fluency performance in AD patients[42,77-80] but a more ambiguous profile has emerged with category fluency tasks and may reflect the specific choices of categories. Perhaps surprisingly, men with AD significantly out-perform women on the most commonly used category of animals[46] as well as for insects, trees, tools, musical instruments, vehicles[49] and birds[41]. Nevertheless, others have found no significant sex differences for: Animals[45,46,49,77,79,81], fruits[49,79], furniture[41,49] supermarket items or first names[42]. Only one study[42] has asserted a female semantic fluency advantage, though this was for the total of animals, fruits and vegetables combined.

### **VISUOSPATIAL ABILITIES IN AD**

While verbal and memory problems in AD are widely acknowledged, the prevalence of visuospatial deficits has been relatively underplayed, and may be important given the link between visuospatial abilities and functional competence in healthy older individuals[82] as well as those with dementia[83]. Some evidence also intimates that visuospatial tests may be useful in staging the disease process, differentiating mild from moderate dementia in AD[84].

People with AD fare worse than the healthy elderly on visuospatial tasks, including, for example, tests of mental rotation[85-88]. Lineweaver *et al*[88] posited that since mental rotation involves the parietal cortex, and AD results in extensive damage to this region, AD patients would be impaired at this task. This was indeed the case when compared with healthy elderly controls[88].

Salmon and Bondi[89] claimed that the visuospatial deficits associated with AD are usually evident in visuoconstructional tasks (*e.g*., block design) and visuoperceptual tasks (*e.g*., judgement of line orientation task). In line with this, several studies show that AD patients are worse than elderly controls on the Judgement of Line Orientation (JLO) task[88,90-92], although Finton *et al’s*[93] AD patients presented with no problems on this task. Impairments have been reported both for block design[91,94] and for figure copying[95,96]. Even participants with mild AD score lower than elderly controls on a figure-copying task[97,98] and on drawing a complex figure from memory[98].

Visuospatial deficits are also apparent for some years *prior* to AD diagnosis. Backman *et al*[99] found that healthy elderly individuals, who were later diagnosed with AD, performed worse on visuospatial tasks than those who remained free of dementia at follow-up. In a related vein, Laukka *et al*[100] identified an increase in the rate of visuospatial decline in elderly participants up to 10 years prior to AD diagnosis.

#### **SEX DIFFERENCES IN VISUOSPATIAL ABILITIES IN AD**

Although AD reduces performance on a range of visuospatial tasks, does the performance on these tasks differ between men and women? If AD affected men and women equivalently, then we might expect to see a continuing male advantage on most visuospatial tasks, as an extension of the typical healthy elderly profile.

Of 16 studies that have considered sex differences in AD patient cognition, nine included at least one visuospatial ability task (Table 2). Only one used a spatial perception task[90], which was primarily concerned with navigation (they also included the JLO task) and no significant sex differences emerged. All other papers examined spatial visualisation tasks where, as already discussed, findings in the general population are variable and seem to be contingent on the specific task used. Buckwalter *et al*[55] found no differences between male and female AD patients on block design. Beinhoff *et al*[45], however, reported that AD males outperformed AD females at a drawing task measuring visuospatial episodic memory. These findings were unlikely to reflect a generalised visuospatial skill advantage as no sex differences emerged for visuospatial memory span. Most other researchers, however, have failed to discern any difference between AD men and AD women at copying a geometric figure[46,55,80,81,101]. Heun and Kochler[101] did report a male superiority on visuoconstructive tests that involved copying geometrical figures such as cubes, but this did not reach significance.

In summary, the visuospatial abilities of men and women with AD do not parallel the male-female divergence seen in the healthy population. To date however, no paper has examined mental rotation performance in AD patients, which as discussed earlier, is the most sensitive visuospatial task to sex differences in the general population. Given the complexity of rotation tasks, researchers may feel they are less useful with AD patients. As noted, Lineweaver *et al*[88] did use a simplified rotation task, but they did not report male and female performance separately.

By contrast, some studies suggest that sex-based cognitive differences may disappear or even reverse in AD. For example, Perneczky *et al*[81] reported no significant sex differences in patients with mild AD on either verbal or visuospatial tests. One possible interpretation is that a proportionally greater deterioration of verbal and visuospatial ability occurs, respectively, for women and men. However, some contend that the male visuospatial advantage remains in AD sufferers, possibly on tasks that tasks requiring active manipulation of visuospatial information[102]. And Beinhoff *et al*[45] reported that AD males were superior at learning and retaining visuospatial information, though no sex differences in visuospatial memory span emerged. Turning to verbal abilities, Chapman *et al*[103] found greater accuracy in AD men on the Logical Memory test, which assesses verbal episodic memory, and this was a reversal of the profile in their healthy elderly controls. Surprisingly perhaps, male AD patients are also superior on naming tasks[46,55,77], and verbal fluency[55]. It is evident then that findings relating to sex differences in AD patient cognition are somewhat inconsistent, and the results of individual studies may even be misleading on this issue. Moreover, a failure to find significant sex differences in some studies may reflect insufficient statistical power; and thus, meta-analysis is a useful approach in this area.

Surprisingly few studies present neurocognitive data separately on males and females with AD. Irvine *et al*[104] identified just 15 published studies presenting data from a total of 828 men and 1238 women with AD. Unsurprisingly, AD studies contained more female than male patients (60% *vs* 40%) and although most researchers test both male and female patients, they do not routinely report between-sex comparisons, and so any differences have gone unnoticed. In earlier work, we tried to circumvent this methodological drawback by assessing the “proportion” of male participants per study as a moderator of effect sizes. This approach showed that picture-naming effect sizes increase in AD patients as the proportion of female patients increase[67]. Similarly, our meta-analysis[67] of 92 studies examining semantic and 96 examining phonemic fluency in over 4500 and 3000 AD patients respectively, found that the proportion of females significantly predicted both effect sizes. In other words, as most studies of AD patients have more females, studies will tend to significantly inflate effects, and differences in the proportions of male and female participants will increase variability in findings across studies.

***Irvine, Laws, Gale and Kondel (2012) meta-analysis***

The meta-analysis by Irvine *et al*[104] uncovered small, but significant male advantages across each of five cognitive domains examined (Cohen’s *d*, 95%CIs, Table 3): episodic memory (*d* = - 0.17, 95%CI: -0.33 to -0.01) semantic memory (*d* = -0.25, 95%CI: -0.42 to -0.07) verbal (*d* = -0.27, 95%CI: -0.37 to -0.16), non-semantic (*d =* -0.14, 95%CI: -0.26 to -0.02) and visuospatial (*d* = -0.24, 95%CI: -0.43 to -0.05). In terms of consistency, 49 of 52 (94%) effect sizes calculated by Irvine *et al*[104] were in the direction of worse female performance across varied cognitive domains. Furthermore, moderator regression analyses revealed that these deficits were not predicted by differences in age, education or overall dementia severity (as measured by MMSE). Hence, the worse cognitive performance of women with AD is not attributable to obvious demographic confounds.

What are the possible reasons for AD affecting the cognitive abilities in women more than in men?

One reason for the more pronounced decline in women might relate to men having greater cognitive reserve. Cognitive reserve has been defined as the amount of brain damage an individual can tolerate before reaching a clinical threshold for impairment[105]. Individuals with greater reserve are hypothesized to sustain more AD-related neuronal damage before onset of symptoms and clinical diagnosis. Consistent with this hypothesis, several recent neuroimaging studies have reported differences in brain function for male and female AD patients who are at the same disease stage. In accord with the greater age related cognitive decline in men, corresponding brain imaging evidence points to greater age-related brain deterioration in males than females[36,106]. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) has detected greater age-related brain atrophy (as indicated by increased cerebrospinal fluid volume) in males than females[108]. In terms of specific regions and structures, greater age-related frontal and temporal lobe volume reductions have been described in males[109], while others[110] have reported a more specific reduction in hippocampal volume across early adulthood in males but not in females. A more recent and novel study using diffusion tensor imaging[111] assessed patterns of white matter connectivity - the connectome - in a large sample of males (*n* = 428) and females (*n* = 521) aged from 8 to 22, finding that females displayed stronger interhemispheric connections, while intrahemispheric connections seemed stronger in males. Although the study found no age-by-sex interaction, suggesting no sex differences in the developmental trajectory of connectivity, the duration covered was relatively limited.

In their post mortem analyses of 141 brains from the Religious Orders Study, Barnes *et al*[21] found the association between AD pathology and clinical AD was significantly more likely to be expressed in women than in men. Indeed, each unit of AD pathology (based on neuritic plaques, diffuse plaques, and neurofibrillary tangles in areas sampled from four cortical regions) increased the odds of clinical AD by more than 20 times in women compared with a 3-fold increase in men. Furthermore, with each additional unit of AD pathology, the cognitive function scores for episodic memory, semantic memory, working memory, perceptual speed, and visuospatial ability were significantly more reduced in women than in men.

Although male and female AD patients show some commonalities in functional imaging studies, differences in regional cerebral blood flow (rCBF) emerge, with women showing a more severe decrease of rCBF in the medial temporal region and frontal lobe[112]. Neuroimaging studies reporting sex differences in brain function for males and females at the same stage of the disease are consistent with a *reserve* hypothesis. Perneczky *et al*[81,113] found that despite being at the same disease stage; and showing no significant cognitive differences, men with AD had more pronounced and extensive pathology affecting the frontal, temporal and insular cortex, as well as the hippocampus in the right hemisphere. Moreover, women were more likely to clinically express reductions of regional cerebral metabolic rate as dementia. The authors suggest that this could be because the brain reserve capacity serves as a stronger counterweight to neurodegeneration in men than in women.

Early neuropathological progression appears to be independent of sex, but female MCI patients show an increased vulnerability to cognitive impairment earlier in the illness course; and women with AD show greater cognitive impairment than men, despite an apparent equivalence in brain atrophy[114]. Perneczky *et al*[113] reported more pronounced and extensive AD pathology for men than women in the frontal, temporal and insular cortices as well as the right hippocampus, despite being at the same disease stage and showing no significant differences in general cognitive abilities.

The apolipoprotein E (APOE) ε4 allele is an established genetic risk factor for AD[115]. Although estimates vary somewhat across studies and ethnicity, the *APOE* ε*4* allele is present in > 50% of AD patients and approximately only 15% of healthy elderly controls[116]. Crucially, *APOE* ε*4* affects the probability of developing AD more in women than men[117-120]. This common polymorphism increases the risk of clinical conversion more in women than in men both in the conversion from healthy aging to MCI/AD and in the conversion from MCI to AD[120]. Lin *et al*[121] have recently examined longitudinal rates of change over eight years in a large sample of 398 MCI subjects (141 females and 257 males), finding faster rates of cognitive and functional decline in women than men and this effect was greater in female *APOE* ε*4* carriers. In the healthy population, the impact of APOE ε*4* on cognitive performance is more pronounced in women[122,123], and has been specifically linked to hippocampal atrophy in female MCI sufferers[124]. A large post mortem study (*n* = 729) established that AD-related abnormalities such as neurofibrillary tangles and senile plaques are affected by a complex interaction between the aging process, sex, and genetic (*APOE* ε*4*) risk factors[125]. These findings are consistent with a relatively greater semantic and verbal impairment in female AD sufferers that differs from, and is greater than, any pre-existing sex differences in cognition[101].

Estrogen has been implicated in the pathobiology of AD[126]. Indeed, findings suggest that verbal sex differences in AD may arise via an estrogen deficiency in women. Further evidence shows that Estrogen therapy prevents the decrease in verbal memory when administered immediately following the surgical removal of both ovaries in premenopausal women[127]. Women with AD who receive estrogen hormonal therapy perform as well on naming and verbal short-term memory tasks as men and significantly better than AD women not receiving such therapy. Further evidence suggests that duration of estrogen use is related to the rate of global cognitive decline and visuospatial ability in non-demented elderly women, although not to semantic or episodic memory[37]. Loss of estrogen alone cannot fully explain the poorer cognitive performance of women with AD; otherwise we would expect the same deficits seen in women with AD (for verbal fluency and verbal episodic memory) to be evident in the healthy elderly - and this is not the case.

Following the menopause, cognitive abilities in healthy elderly women may be adversely affected by estrogen loss, albeit primarily on verbal tasks[127-130]. Indeed, women show significant changes in cognitive function during pregnancy and the postpartum period, principally in verbal free-recall and working memory[131,132], word fluency and word list learning[133]. Recent evidence suggests that during the third trimester and the early postpartum period, verbal recall deteriorates in pregnant women[134]. Furthermore, a longitudinal study of pregnant women showed they performed worse than non-pregnant controls on two tests of verbal memory, a visuospatial task, and on a task of processing speed[135]. These findings support the view that changes in sex hormone production within the physiological range that occur during reproductive events modify performance on a variety of cognitive functions – but principally on verbal tasks.

**CONCLUSION**

Although not unanimous, the evidence presented in this review converges on the multiple cognitive abilities being more adversely affected by AD in women than in men. This conclusion is strengthened by our own recent meta-analyses consistently affirming that men with AD outperform women with AD across a range of cognitive domains.

The literature on verbal abilities in the elderly reveals either an advantage for women or no sex difference - crucially, not one paper documents a male advantage in this domain. Findings are somewhat inconsistent in studies of cognitive decline under normal aging, suggesting something specific about AD neuropathology that disadvantages females. Some limited evidence suggests that females deteriorate faster than males in the earlier stages of the disease. Possible explanations are for a hormonal influence, possibly due to estrogen loss in women or a greater cognitive reserve in males, which provides protection against the disease process. Future studies which examine sex differences on a longitudinal basis, may provide greater clarity on these issues.

The unequivocal finding from the Irvine *et al*[104] meta-analysis of AD patients is that men modestly but significantly outperform women in all of the five cognitive domains assessed. Moreover, most papers report better male performance within every domain (only three had a female superiority in any single domain and the effect sizes were close to zero). Neither any differences in age nor dementia severity (as measured by MMSE) could account for the male advantage. Overall, the findings indicate that in women with AD, multiple cognitive functions are affected both more severely and more widely than men.

**REFERENCES**

1 **Cahill L**. Fundamental sex difference in human brain architecture. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2014; **111**: 577-578 [PMID: 24381154 DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1320954111]

2 **Ferri CP**, Sousa R, Albanese E, Ribeiro WS, Honyashiki M. World Alzheimer Report 2009-Executive Summary. Edited by: Prince M, Jackson J London. London: Alzheimer's Disease International; 2009: 1–22

3 **Andersen K**, Launer LJ, Dewey ME, Letenneur L, Ott A, Copeland JR, Dartigues JF, Kragh-Sorensen P, Baldereschi M, Brayne C, Lobo A, Martinez-Lage JM, Stijnen T, Hofman A. Gender differences in the incidence of AD and vascular dementia: The EURODEM Studies. EURODEM Incidence Research Group. *Neurology* 1999; **53**: 1992-1997 [PMID: 10599770 DOI: 10.1212/wnl.53.9.1992]

4 **Lobo A**, Launer LJ, Fratiglioni L, Andersen K, Di Carlo A, Breteler MM, Copeland JR, Dartigues JF, Jagger C, Martinez-Lage J, Soininen H, Hofman A. Prevalence of dementia and major subtypes in Europe: A collaborative study of population-based cohorts. Neurologic Diseases in the Elderly Research Group. *Neurology* 2000; **54**: S4-S9 [PMID: 10854354]

5 **Lerner AJ**. Women, Alzheimer's disease. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab* 1999; **84**: 1830-1834 [DOI: 10.1210/jc.84.6.1830]

6 **Gao S**, Hendrie HC, Hall KS, Hui S. The relationships between age, sex, and the incidence of dementia and Alzheimer disease: a meta-analysis. *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 1998; **55**: 809-815 [PMID: 9736007 DOI: 10.1001/archpsyc.55.9.809]

7 **Hyde JS**, Linn MC. Gender differences in verbal ability: A meta-analysis. *Psychol Bull* 1988; **104**: 53–69 [DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.104.1.53]

8 **Weiss EM**, Deisenhammer EA, Hinterhuber H, Marksteiner J. [Gender differences in cognitive functions]. *Fortschr Neurol Psychiatr* 2005; **73**: 587-595 [PMID: 16217699 DOI: 10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00288-X]

9 **Voyer D**, Voyer S, Bryden MP. Magnitude of sex differences in spatial abilities: a meta-analysis and consideration of critical variables. *Psychol Bull* 1995; **117**: 250-270 [PMID: 7724690 DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.117.2.250]

10 **Burton LA**, Henninger D, Hafetz J. Gender differences in relations of mental rotation, verbal fluency, and SAT scores to finger length ratios as hormonal indexes. *Dev Neuropsychol* 2005; **28**: 493-505 [PMID: 15992253 DOI: 10.1207/s15326942dn2801\_3]

11 **de Frias CM**, Nilsson LG, Herlitz A. Sex differences in cognition are stable over a 10-year period in adulthood and old age. *Neuropsychol Dev Cogn B Aging Neuropsychol Cogn* 2006; **13**: 574-587 [PMID: 16887790 DOI: 10.1080/13825580600678418]

12 **Brickman AM**, Paul RH, Cohen RA, Williams LM, MacGregor KL, Jefferson AL, Tate DF, Gunstad J, Gordon E. Category and letter verbal fluency across the adult lifespan: relationship to EEG theta power. *Arch Clin Neuropsychol* 2005; **20**: 561-573 [PMID: 15939182 DOI: 10.1016/j.acn.2004.12.006]

13 **Rodriguez-Aranda C**, Martinussen M. Age-related differences in performance of phonemic verbal fluency measured by Controlled Oral Word Association Task (COWAT): a meta-analytic study. *Dev Neuropsychol* 2006; **30**: 697-717 [PMID: 16995832 DOI: 10.1207/s15326942dn3002\_3]

14 **Weiss EM**, Ragland JD, Brensinger CM, Bilker WB, Deisenhammer EA, Delazer M. Sex differences in clustering and switching in verbal fluency tasks. *J Int Neuropsychol Soc* 2006; **12**: 502-509 [PMID: 16981602 DOI: 10.1017/s1355617706060656]

15 **Capitani E**, Laiacona M, Barbarotto R. Gender affects word retrieval of certain categories in semantic fluency tasks. *Cortex* 1999; **35**: 273-278 [PMID: 10369099 DOI: 10.1016/S0010-9452(08)70800-1]

16 **Connor LT**, Spiro A, Obler LK, Albert ML. Change in object naming ability during adulthood. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* 2004; **59**: P203-P209 [PMID: 15358792 DOI: 10.1093/geronb/59.5.P203]

17 **Wallentin M**. Putative sex differences in verbal abilities and language cortex: a critical review. *Brain Lang* 2009; **108**: 175-183 [PMID: 18722007 DOI: 10.1016/j.bandl.2008.07.001]

18 **Linn MC**, Petersen AC. Emergence and characterization of sex differences in spatial ability: a meta-analysis. *Child Dev* 1985; **56**: 1479-1498 [PMID: 4075870 DOI: 10.2307/1130467]

19 **Cohen J**. Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences. 2nd ed. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, 1988

20 **Li R**, Singh M. Sex differences in cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease. *Front Neuroendocrinol* 2014; **35**: 385-403 [PMID: 24434111 DOI: 10.1016/j.yfrne.2014.01.002]

21 **Barnes LL**, Wilson RS, Bienias JL, Schneider JA, Evans DA, Bennett DA. Sex differences in the clinical manifestations of Alzheimer disease pathology. *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2005; **62**: 685-691 [PMID: 15939846 DOI: 10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.685]

22 **Gerstorf D**, Herlitz A, Smith J. Stability of sex differences in cognition in advanced old age: the role of education and attrition. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* 2006; **61**: P245-P249 [PMID: 16855037 DOI: 10.1093/geronb/61.4.P245]

23 **Maylor EA**, Reimers S, Choi J, Collaer ML, Peters M, Silverman I. Gender and sexual orientation differences in cognition across adulthood: age is kinder to women than to men regardless of sexual orientation. *Arch Sex Behav* 2007; **36**: 235-249 [PMID: 17351741 DOI: 10.1007/s10508-006-9155-y]

24 **Read S**, Pedersen NL, Gatz M, Berg S, Vuoksimaa E, Malmberg B, Johansson B, McClearn GE. Sex differences after all those years? Heritability of cognitive abilities in old age. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* 2006; **61**: P137-P143 [PMID: 16670182 DOI: 10.1093/geronb/61.3.P137]

25 **Mathuranath PS**, George A, Cherian PJ, Alexander A, Sarma SG, Sarma PS. Effects of age, education and gender on verbal fluency. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 2003; **25**: 1057-1064 [PMID: 14566579 DOI: 10.1076/jcen.25.8.1057.16736]

26 **Robert M**, Tanguay M. Perception and representation of the Euclidean coordinates in mature and elderly men and women. *Exp Aging Res* 1990; **16**: 123-131 [PMID: 2090463 DOI: 10.1080/07340669008251539]

27 **Lanting S**, Haugrud N, Crossley M. The effect of age and sex on clustering and switching during speeded verbal fluency tasks. *J Int Neuropsychol Soc* 2009; **15**: 196-204 [PMID: 19203431 DOI: 10.1017/s1355617709090237]

28 **Finkel D**, Reynolds CA, McArdle JJ, Gatz M, Pedersen NL. Latent growth curve analyses of accelerating decline in cognitive abilities in late adulthood. *Dev Psychol* 2003; **39**: 535-550 [PMID: 12760521 DOI: 10.1037/0012-1649.39.3.535]

29 **Barrett-Connor E**, Kritz-Silverstein D. Gender differences in cognitive function with age: the Rancho Bernardo study. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 1999; **47**: 159-164 [PMID: 9988286 DOI: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.1999.tb04573.x]

30 **Larrabee GJ**, Crook TH. Do men show more rapid age-associated decline in simulated everyday verbal memory than do women? *Psychol Aging* 1993; **8**: 68-71 [PMID: 8461117 DOI: 10.1037/0882-7974.8.1.68]

31 **Meyer JS**, Rauch GM, Crawford K, Rauch RA, Konno S, Akiyama H, Terayama Y, Haque A. Risk factors accelerating cerebral degenerative changes, cognitive decline and dementia. *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry* 1999; **14**: 1050-1061 [PMID: 10607973 DOI: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-1166(199912)14: 12<1050: : AID-GPS56>3.0.CO; 2-Z]

32 **Rowe G**, Turcotte J, Hasher L. The effect of age and gender on visuo-spatial working memory. In Poster presented at the 10th Cognitive Aging Conference, Atlanta, GA, 2004

33 **Wiederholt WC**, Cahn D, Butters NM, Salmon DP, Kritz-Silverstein D, Barrett-Connor E. Effects of age, gender and education on selected neuropsychological tests in an elderly community cohort. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 1993; **41**: 639-647 [PMID: 8505462 DOI: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.1993.tb06738.x]

34 **Zelinski EM**, Stewart ST. Individual differences in 16-year memory changes. *Psychol Aging* 1998; **13**: 622-630 [PMID: 9883462 DOI: 10.1037/0882-7974.13.4.622]

35 **Singh-Manoux A**, Kivimaki M, Glymour MM, Elbaz A, Berr C, Ebmeier KP, Ferrie JE, Dugravot A. Timing of onset of cognitive decline: results from Whitehall II prospective cohort study. *BMJ* 2012; **344**: d7622 [PMID: 22223828 DOI: 10.1136/bmj.d7622]

36 **Meinz EJ**, Salthouse TA. Is age kinder to females than males? *Psychon Bull Rev* 1998; **5**: 56-70 [DOI: 10.3758/BF03209457]

37 **Barnes LL**, Wilson RS, Schneider JA, Bienias JL, Evans DA, Bennett DA. Gender, cognitive decline, and risk of AD in older persons. *Neurology* 2003; **60**: 1777-1781 [PMID: 12796530 DOI: 10.1212/01.WNL.0000065892.67099.2A]

38 **Proust-Lima C**, Amieva H, Letenneur L, Orgogozo JM, Jacqmin-Gadda H, Dartigues JF. Gender and education impact on brain aging: a general cognitive factor approach. *Psychol Aging* 2008; **23**: 608-620 [PMID: 18808250 DOI: 10.1037/a0012838]

39 **Duff K**, Schoenberg MR, Mold JW, Scott JG, Adams RL. Gender differences on the Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status subtests in older adults: baseline and retest data. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 2011; **33**: 448-455 [PMID: 21154078 DOI: 10.1080/13803395.2010.533156]

40 **Fahlander K**, Wahlin A, Fastbom J, Grut M, Forsell Y, Hill RD, Winblad B, Bäckman L. The relationship between signs of cardiovascular deficiency and cognitive performance in old age: a population-based study. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* 2000; **55**: P259-P265 [PMID: 10985290 DOI: 10.1093/geronb/55.5.P259]

41 **Marra C**, Ferraccioli M, Gainotti G. Gender-related dissociations of categorical fluency in normal subjects and in subjects with Alzheimer's disease. *Neuropsychology* 2007; **21**: 207-211 [PMID: 17402820 DOI: 10.1037/0894-4105.21.2.207]

42 **Monsch AU**, Bondi MW, Butters N, Salmon DP, Katzman R, Thal LJ. Comparisons of verbal fluency tasks in the detection of dementia of the Alzheimer type. *Arch Neurol* 1992; **49**: 1253-1258 [PMID: 1449404 DOI: 10.1001/archneur.1992.00530360051017]

43 **Moore CS**, Miller IN, Andersen RL, Arndt S, Haynes WG, Moser DJ. Gender differences in neuropsychological performance in individuals with atherosclerosis: impact of vascular function. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 2011; **33**: 9-16 [PMID: 20512721 DOI: 10.1080/13803391003757841]

44 **Welsh-Bohmer KA**, Ostbye T, Sanders L, Pieper CF, Hayden KM, Tschanz JT, Norton MC. Neuropsychological performance in advanced age: influences of demographic factors and Apolipoprotein E: findings from the Cache County Memory Study. *Clin Neuropsychol* 2009; **23**: 77-99 [PMID: 18609337 DOI: 10.1080/13854040801894730]

45 **Beinhoff U**, Tumani H, Brettschneider J, Bittner D, Riepe MW. Gender-specificities in Alzheimer's disease and mild cognitive impairment. *J Neurol* 2008; **255**: 117-122 [PMID: 18202815 DOI: 10.1007/s00415-008-0726-9]

46 **Henderson VW**, Buckwalter JG. Cognitive deficits of men and women with Alzheimer's disease. *Neurology* 1994; **44**: 90-96 [PMID: 8290098 DOI: 10.1212/WNL.44.1.90]

47 **van Hooren SA**, Valentijn AM, Bosma H, Ponds RW, van Boxtel MP, Jolles J. Cognitive functioning in healthy older adults aged 64-81: a cohort study into the effects of age, sex, and education. *Neuropsychol Dev Cogn B Aging Neuropsychol Cogn* 2007; **14**: 40-54 [PMID: 17164189 DOI: 10.1080/138255890969483]

48 **Snitz BE**, Unverzagt FW, Chang CC, Bilt JV, Gao S, Saxton J, Hall KS, Ganguli M. Effects of age, gender, education and race on two tests of language ability in community-based older adults. *Int Psychogeriatr* 2009; **21**: 1051-1062 [PMID: 19586563 DOI: 10.1017/S1041610209990214]

49 **Moreno-Martínez FJ**, Laws KR, Schulz J. The impact of dementia, age and sex on category fluency: greater deficits in women with Alzheimer's disease. *Cortex* 2008; **44**: 1256-1264 [PMID: 18761139 DOI: 10.1016/j.cortex.2007.11.008]

50 **Whittle C**, Corrada MM, Dick M, Ziegler R, Kahle-Wrobleski K, Paganini-Hill A, Kawas C. Neuropsychological data in nondemented oldest old: the 90+ Study. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 2007; **29**: 290-299 [PMID: 17454349 DOI: 10.1080/13803390600678038]

51 **Albert ML**, Spiro A, Sayers KJ, Cohen JA, Brady CB, Goral M, Obler LK. Effects of health status on word finding in aging. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2009; **57**: 2300-2305 [PMID: 20121990 DOI: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.2009.02559]

52 **Lansing AE**, Ivnik RJ, Cullum CM, Randolph C. An empirically derived short form of the Boston naming test. *Arch Clin Neuropsychol* 1999; **14**: 481-487 [PMID: 14590575 DOI: 10.1093/arclin/14.6.481]

53 **Randolph C**, Lansing AE, Ivnik RJ, Cullum CM, Hermann BP. Determinants of confrontation naming performance. *Arch Clin Neuropsychol* 1999; **14**: 489-496 [PMID: 14590576 DOI: 10.1093/arclin/14.6.489]

54 **Welch LW**, Doineau D, Johnson S, King D. Educational and gender normative data for the Boston Naming Test in a group of older adults. *Brain Lang* 1996; **53**: 260-266 [PMID: 8726536 DOI: 10.1006/brln.1996.0047]

55 **Buckwalter JG**, Rizzo AA, McCleary R, Shankle R, Dick M, Henderson VW. Gender comparisons of cognitive performances among vascular dementia, Alzheimer disease, and older adults without dementia. *Arch Neurol* 1996; **53**: 436-439 [PMID: 8624219 DOI: 10.1001/archneur.1996.00550050066025]

56 **Coppens P**, Frisinger D. Category-specific naming effect in non-brain-damaged individuals. *Brain Lang* 2005; **94**: 61-71 [PMID: 15896384 DOI: 10.1016/j.bandl.2004.11.008]

57 **Kent PS**, Luszcz MA. A review of the Boston Naming Test and multiple-occasion normative data for older adults on 15-item versions. *Clin Neuropsychol* 2002; **16**: 555-574 [PMID: 12822064 DOI: 10.1076/clin.16.4.555.13916]

58 **Ross TP**, Lichtenberg PA, Christensen BK. Normative data on the Boston Naming Test for elderly adults in a demographically diverse medical sample. *Clin Neuropsychol* 1995; **9**: 321-325 [DOI: 10.1080/13854049508400496]

59 **Zec RF**, Burkett NR, Markwell SJ, Larsen DL. A cross-sectional study of the effects of age, education, and gender on the Boston Naming Test. *Clin Neuropsychol* 2007; **21**: 587-616 [PMID: 17613980 DOI: 10.1080/13854040701220028]

60 **Campos A**, Perez-Fabello MJ, Gomez-Juncal R. Gender and age differences in measured and self-perceived imaging capacity. *Pers Indiv Differ* 2004; **37**: 1383-1389 [DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2004.01.008]

61 **Parsons TD**, Rizzo AR, van der Zaag C, McGee JS, Buckwalter JG. Gender differences and cognition among older adults. *Aging, Neuropsychol C* 2005; **12**: 78-88 [DOI: 10.1080/13825580590925125]

62 **Salmon DP**. Neuropsychological features of mild cognitive impairment and preclinical Alzheimer's disease. *Curr Top Behav Neurosci* 2012; **10**: 187-212 [PMID: 22042707 DOI: 10.1007/7854\_2011\_171]

63 **Auriacombe S**, Lechevallier N, Amieva H, Harston S, Raoux N, Dartigues JF. A longitudinal study of quantitative and qualitative features of category verbal fluency in incident Alzheimer's disease subjects: results from the PAQUID study. *Dement Geriatr Cogn Disord* 2006; **21**: 260-266 [PMID: 16465054 DOI: 10.1159/000091407]

64 **Adlam AL**, Bozeat S, Arnold R, Watson P, Hodges JR. Semantic knowledge in mild cognitive impairment and mild Alzheimer's disease. *Cortex* 2006; **42**: 675-684 [PMID: 16909626 DOI: 10.1016/s0010-9452(08)70404-0]

65 **Balthazar ML**, Martinelli JE, Cendes F, Damasceno BP. Lexical semantic memory in amnestic mild cognitive impairment and mild Alzheimer's disease. *Arq Neuropsiquiatr* 2007; **65**: 619-622 [PMID: 17876402 DOI: 10.1590/s0004-282x2007000400014]

66 **Henry JD**, Crawford JR, Phillips LH. Verbal fluency performance in dementia of the Alzheimer's type: a meta-analysis. *Neuropsychologia* 2004; **42**: 1212-1222 [PMID: 15178173 DOI: 10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2004.02.001]

67 **Laws KR**, Duncan A, Gale TM. 'Normal' semantic-phonemic fluency discrepancy in Alzheimer's disease? A meta-analytic study. *Cortex* 2010; **46**: 595-601 [PMID: 19560132 DOI: 10.1016/j.cortex.2009.04.009]

68 **Butters N**, Granholm E, Salmon DP, Grant I, Wolfe J. Episodic and semantic memory: a comparison of amnesic and demented patients. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 1987; **9**: 479-497 [PMID: 2959682 DOI: 10.1080/01688638708410764]

69 **Rogers SL**, Friedman RB. The underlying mechanisms of semantic memory loss in Alzheimer's disease and semantic dementia. *Neuropsychologia* 2008; **46**: 12-21 [PMID: 17897685 DOI: 10.1016/j.neuropsychologia.2007.08.010]

70 **Phillips LH**, Scott C, Henry JD, Mowat D, Bell JS. Emotion perception in Alzheimer's disease and mood disorder in old age. *Psychol Aging* 2010; **25**: 38-47 [PMID: 20230126 DOI: 10.1037/a0017369]

71 **Balthazar ML**, Cendes F, Damasceno BP. Semantic error patterns on the Boston Naming Test in normal aging, amnestic mild cognitive impairment, and mild Alzheimer's disease: is there semantic disruption? *Neuropsychology* 2008; **22**: 703-709 [PMID: 18999343 DOI: 101037/a0012919]

72 **Frank EM**, McDade HL, Scott WK. Naming in dementia secondary to Parkinson's, Huntington's, and Alzheimer's diseases. *J Commun Disord* 1996; **29**: 183-197 [PMID: 8799853 DOI: 10.1016/0021-9924(95)00021-6]

73 **Lukatela K**, Malloy P, Jenkins M, Cohen R. The naming deficit in early Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. *Neuropsychology* 1998; **12**: 565-572 [PMID: 9805326 DOI: 10.1037/0894-4105.12.4.565]

74 **Nicholas M**, Obler LK, Au R, Albert ML. On the nature of naming errors in aging and dementia: a study of semantic relatedness. *Brain Lang* 1996; **54**: 184-195 [PMID: 8811952 DOI: 10.1006/brln.1996.0070]

75 **Ahmed S**, Arnold R, Thompson SA, Graham KS, Hodges JR. Naming of objects, faces and buildings in mild cognitive impairment. *Cortex* 2008; **44**: 746-752 [PMID: 18472044 DOI: 10.1016/j.cortex.2007.02.002]

76 **Buckwalter JG**, Sobel E, Dunn ME, Diz MM, Henderson VW. Gender differences on a brief measure of cognitive functioning in Alzheimer's disease. *Arch Neurol* 1993; **50**: 757-760 [PMID: 8323481 DOI: 10.1001/archneur.1993.00540070069018]

77 **McPherson S**, Back C, Buckwalter JG, Cummings JL. Gender-related cognitive deficits in Alzheimer's disease. *Int Psychogeriatr* 1999; **11**: 117-122 [PMID: 11475426 DOI: 10.1017/S1041610299005670]

78 **Ripich DN**, Petrill SA, Whitehouse PJ, Ziol EW. Gender differences in language of AD patients: a longitudinal study. *Neurology* 1995; **45**: 299-302 [PMID: 7854529 DOI: 10.1212/WNL.45.2.299]

79 **Bayles KA**, Azuma T, Cruz RF, Tomoeda CK, Wood JA, Montgomery EB. Gender differences in language of Alzheimer disease patients revisited. *Alzheimer Dis Assoc Disord* 1999; **13**: 138-146 [PMID: 10485572 DOI: 10.1097/00002093-199907000-00005]

80 **Henderson VW**, Watt L, Buckwalter JG. Cognitive skills associated with estrogen replacement in women with Alzheimer's disease. *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 1996; **21**: 421-430 [PMID: 8844880 DOI: 10.1016/0306-4530(95)00060-7]

81 **Perneczky R**, Drzezga A, Diehl-Schmid J, Li Y, Kurz A. Gender differences in brain reserve: an (18)F-FDG PET study in Alzheimer's disease. *J Neurol* 2007; **254**: 1395-1400 [PMID: 17934882 DOI: 10.1007/s00415-007-0558-z]

82 **North AJ**, Ulatowska HK. Competence in independently living older adults: assessment and correlates. *J Gerontol* 1981; **36**: 576-582 [PMID: 7264241 DOI: 10.1093/geronj/36.5.576]

83 **Hill RD**, Bäckman L, Fratiglioni L. Determinants of functional abilities in dementia. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 1995; **43**: 1092-1097 [PMID: 7560697 DOI: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.1995.tb07006.x]

84 **Herlitz A**, Airaksinen E, Nordström E. Sex differences in episodic memory: the impact of verbal and visuospatial ability. *Neuropsychology* 1999; **13**: 590-597 [PMID: 10527068 DOI: 10.1037/0894-4105.13.4.590]

85 **Kurylo DD**, Corkin S, Rizzo JF, Growdon JG. Greater relative impairment of object recognition than of visuospatial abilities in Alzheimer's disease. *Neuropsychology* 1996; **10**: 74-81 [DOI: 10.1037/0894-4105.10.1.74]

86 **Mendola JD**, Cronin-Golomb A, Corkin S, Growdon JH. Prevalence of visual deficits in Alzheimer's disease. *Optom Vis Sci* 1995; **72**: 155-167 [PMID: 7609938 DOI: 10.1097/00006324-199503000-00003]

87 **Mendez MF**, Tomsak RL, Remler B. Disorders of the visual system in Alzheimer's disease. *J Clin Neuroophthalmol* 1990; **10**: 62-69 [PMID: 2139054]

88 **Lineweaver TT**, Salmon DP, Bondi MW, Corey-Bloom J. Differential effects of Alzheimer's disease and Huntington's disease on the performance of mental rotation. *J Int Neuropsychol Soc* 2005; **11**: 30-39 [PMID: 15686606]

89 **Salmon DP**, Bondi MW. Neuropsychological assessment of dementia. *Annu Rev Psychol* 2009; **60**: 257-282 [PMID: 18616392 DOI: 10.1146/annurev.psych.57.102904.190024]

90 **Cushman LA**, Duffy CJ. The sex specificity of navigational strategies in Alzheimer disease. *Alzheimer Dis Assoc Disord* 2007; **21**: 122-129 [PMID: 17545737 DOI: 10.1097/WAD.0b013e318047df2f]

91 **Ricker JH**, Keenan PA, Jacobson MW. Visuoperceptual-spatial ability and visual memory in vascular dementia and dementia of the Alzheimer type. *Neuropsychologia* 1994; **32**: 1287-1296 [PMID: 7845568 DOI: 10.1016/0028-3932(94)90110-4]

92 **Ska B**, Poissant A, Joanette Y. Line orientation judgment in normal elderly and subjects with dementia of Alzheimer's type. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 1990; **12**: 695-702 [PMID: 2258431]

93 **Finton MJ**, Lucas JA, Graff-Radford NR, Uitti RJ. Analysis of visuospatial errors in patients with Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 1998; **20**: 186-193 [PMID: 9777472 DOI: 10.1076/jcen.23.5.592.1248]

94 **Cahn-Weiner DA**, Sullivan EV, Shear PK, Fama R, Lim KO, Yesavage JA, Tinklenberg JR, Pfefferbaum A. Brain structural and cognitive correlates of clock drawing performance in Alzheimer's disease. *J Int Neuropsychol Soc* 1999; **5**: 502-509 [PMID: 10561930 DOI: 10.1017/s1355617799566034]

95 **Freeman RQ**, Giovannetti T, Lamar M, Cloud BS, Stern RA, Kaplan E, Libon DJ. Visuoconstructional problems in dementia: contribution of executive systems functions. *Neuropsychology* 2000; **14**: 415-426 [PMID: 10928745 DOI: 10.1037/0894-4105.14.3.415]

96 **Morris JC**, Heyman A, Mohs RC, Hughes JP, van Belle G, Fillenbaum G, Mellits ED, Clark C. The Consortium to Establish a Registry for Alzheimer's Disease (CERAD). Part I. Clinical and neuropsychological assessment of Alzheimer's disease. *Neurology* 1989; **39**: 1159-1165 [PMID: 2771064 DOI: 10.1212/WNL.39.9.1159]

97 **Binetti G**, Cappa SF, Magni E, Padovani A, Bianchetti A, Trabucchi M. Visual and spatial perception in the early phase of Alzheimer's disease. *Neuropsychology* 1998; **12**: 29-33 [PMID: 9460732 DOI: 10.1037/0894-4105.12.1.29]

98 **deIpolyi AR**, Rankin KP, Mucke L, Miller BL, Gorno-Tempini ML. Spatial cognition and the human navigation network in AD and MCI. *Neurology* 2007; **69**: 986-997 [PMID: 17785667 DOI: 10.1212/01.wnl.0000271376.19515.c6]

99 **Backman L**, Wahlin A, Small BJ, Herlitz A, Winblad B, Fratiglioni L. Cognitive functioning in aging and dementia: The Kungsholmen Project. *Aging, Neuropsychol C* 2004; **11**: 212-244 [DOI: 10.1080/13825580490511099]

100 **Laukka EJ**, Macdonald SW, Fratiglioni L, Bäckman L. Preclinical cognitive trajectories differ for Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. *J Int Neuropsychol Soc* 2012; **18**: 191-199 [PMID: 22264384 DOI: 10.1017/S1355617711001718]

101 **Heun R**, Kockler M. Gender differences in the cognitive impairment in Alzheimer's disease. *Arch Womens Ment Health* 2002; **4**: 129-137 [DOI: 10.1007/s007370200011]

102 **Millet X**, Raoux N, Le Carret N, Bouisson J, Dartigues JF, Amieva H. Gender-related differences in visuospatial memory persist in Alzheimer's disease. *Arch Clin Neuropsychol* 2009; **24**: 783-789 [PMID: 19889648 DOI: 10.1093/arclin/acp086]

103 **Chapman RM**, Mapstone M, Gardner MN, Sandoval TC, McCrary JW, Guillily MD, Reilly LA, DeGrush E. Women have farther to fall: gender differences between normal elderly and Alzheimer's disease in verbal memory engender better detection of Alzheimer's disease in women. *J Int Neuropsychol Soc* 2011; **17**: 654-662 [PMID: 21486518 DOI: 10.1017/S1355617711000452]

104 **Irvine K**, Laws KR, Gale TM, Kondel TK. Greater cognitive deterioration in women than men with Alzheimer's disease: a meta analysis. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 2012; **34**: 989-998 [PMID: 22913619 DOI: 10.1080/13803395.2012.712676]

105 **Katzman R**. Education and the prevalence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. *Neurology* 1993; **43**: 13-20 [PMID: 8423876 DOI: 10.1212/WNL.43.1\_Part\_1.13]

106 **Coffey CE**, Lucke JF, Saxton JA, Ratcliff G, Unitas LJ, Billig B, Bryan RN. Sex differences in brain aging: a quantitative magnetic resonance imaging study. *Arch Neurol* 1998; **55**: 169-179 [PMID: 9482358 DOI: 10.1001/archneur.55.2.169]

107 **Laiacona M**, Barbarotto R, Capitani E. Semantic category dissociations in naming: is there a gender effect in Alzheimer's disease? *Neuropsychologia* 1998; **36**: 407-419 [PMID: 9699949 DOI: 10.1016/S0028-3932(97)00125-5]

108 **Gur RC**, Mozley PD, Resnick SM, Gottlieb GL, Kohn M, Zimmerman R, Herman G, Atlas S, Grossman R, Berretta D. Gender differences in age effect on brain atrophy measured by magnetic resonance imaging. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 1991; **88**: 2845-2849 [PMID: 2011592 DOI: 10.1073/pnas.88.7.2845]

109 **Cowell PE**, Turetsky BI, Gur RC, Grossman RI, Shtasel DL, Gur RE. Sex differences in aging of the human frontal and temporal lobes. *J Neurosci* 1994; **14**: 4748-4755 [PMID: 8046448 DOI: 10.1007/s11682-014-9334-8]

110 **Pruessner JC**, Collins DL, Pruessner M, Evans AC. Age and gender predict volume decline in the anterior and posterior hippocampus in early adulthood. *J Neurosci* 2001; **21**: 194-200 [PMID: 11150336]

111 **Ingalhalikar M**, Smith A, Parker D, Satterthwaite TD, Elliott MA, Ruparel K, Hakonarson H, Gur RE, Gur RC, Verma R. Sex differences in the structural connectome of the human brain. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2014; **111**: 823-828 [PMID: 24297904 DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1316909110]

112 **Hanyu H**, Shimizu S, Hirao K, Kanetaka H, Iwamoto T, Chikamori T, Usui Y, Yamashina A, Koizumi K, Abe K. Comparative value of brain perfusion SPECT and [(123)I]MIBG myocardial scintigraphy in distinguishing between dementia with Lewy bodies and Alzheimer's disease. *Eur J Nucl Med Mol Imaging* 2006; **33**: 248-253 [PMID: 16328506 DOI: 10.1007/s00259-005-1921-x]

113 **Perneczky R**, Diehl-Schmid J, Förstl H, Drzezga A, Kurz A. Male gender is associated with greater cerebral hypometabolism in frontotemporal dementia: evidence for sex-related cognitive reserve. *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry* 2007; **22**: 1135-1140 [PMID: 17479980 DOI: 10.1002/gps.1803]

114 **Bai F**, Zhang Z, Watson DR, Yu H, Shi Y, Zhu W, Wang L, Yuan Y, Qian Y. Absent gender differences of hippocampal atrophy in amnestic type mild cognitive impairment. *Neurosci Lett* 2009; **450**: 85-89 [PMID: 19071194 DOI: 10.1016/j.neulet.2008.11.055]

115 **Corder EH**, Saunders AM, Strittmatter WJ, Schmechel DE, Gaskell PC, Small GW, Roses AD, Haines JL, Pericak-Vance MA. Gene dose of apolipoprotein E type 4 allele and the risk of Alzheimer's disease in late onset families. *Science* 1993; **261**: 921-923 [PMID: 8346443 DOI: 10.1126/science.8346443]

116 **Crean S**, Ward A, Mercaldi CJ, Collins JM, Cook MN, Baker NL, Arrighi HM. Apolipoprotein E ε4 prevalence in Alzheimer's disease patients varies across global populations: a systematic literature review and meta-analysis. *Dement Geriatr Cogn Disord* 2011; **31**: 20-30 [PMID: 21124030 DOI: 10.1159/000321984]

117 **Bretsky PM**, Buckwalter JG, Seeman TE, Miller CA, Poirier J, Schellenberg GD, Finch CE, Henderson VW. Evidence for an interaction between apolipoprotein E genotype, gender, and Alzheimer disease. *Alzheimer Dis Assoc Disord* 1999; **13**: 216-221 [PMID: 10609670 DOI: 10.1097/00002093-199910000-00007]

118 **Gomez-Isla T**, West HL, Rebeck GW, Harr SD, Growdon JH, Locascio JJ, Perls TT, Lipsitz LA, Hyman BT. Clinical and pathological correlates of apolipoprotein E epsilon 4 in Alzheimer's disease. *Ann Neurol* 1996; **39**: 62-70 [PMID: 8572669 DOI: 10.1002/ana.410390110]

119 **Payami H**, Zareparsi S, Montee KR, Sexton GJ, Kaye JA, Bird TD, Yu CE, Wijsman EM, Heston LL, Litt M, Schellenberg GD. Gender difference in apolipoprotein E-associated risk for familial Alzheimer disease: a possible clue to the higher incidence of Alzheimer disease in women. *Am J Hum Genet* 1996; **58**: 803-811 [PMID: 8644745]

120 **Altmann A**, Tian L, Henderson VW, Greicius MD. Sex modifies the APOE-related risk of developing Alzheimer disease. *Ann Neurol* 2014; **75**: 563-573 [PMID: 24623176 DOI: 10.1002/ana.24135]

121 [**Lin KA**](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Lin%20KA%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=26451386), [Choudhury KR](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Choudhury%20KR%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=26451386), [Rathakrishnan BG](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Rathakrishnan%20BG%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=26451386), [Marks DM](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Marks%20DM%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=26451386), [Petrella JR](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Petrella%20JR%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=26451386), [Doraiswamy PM](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Doraiswamy%20PM%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=26451386); [Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Alzheimer's%20Disease%20Neuroimaging%20Initiative%5BCorporate%20Author%5D). Marked gender differences in progression of mild cognitive impairment over 8 years. *Alzheimers Dement* (NY) 2015; **1**: 103-110 [PMID: 26451386]

122 **Bartrés-Faz D**, Junqué C, Moral P, López-Alomar A, Sánchez-Aldeguer J, Clemente IC. Apolipoprotein E gender effects on cognitive performance in age-associated memory impairment. *J Neuropsychiatry Clin Neurosci* 2002; **14**: 80-83 [PMID: 11884660 DOI: 10.1176/jnp.14.1.80]

123 **Hyman BT**, Gomez-Isla T, Briggs M, Chung H, Nichols S, Kohout F, Wallace R. Apolipoprotein E and cognitive change in an elderly population. *Ann Neurol* 1996; **40**: 55-66 [PMID: 8687193 DOI: 10.1002/ana.410400111]

124 **Fleisher A**, Grundman M, Jack CR, Petersen RC, Taylor C, Kim HT, Schiller DH, Bagwell V, Sencakova D, Weiner MF, DeCarli C, DeKosky ST, van Dyck CH, Thal LJ. Sex, apolipoprotein E epsilon 4 status, and hippocampal volume in mild cognitive impairment. *Arch Neurol* 2005; **62**: 953-957 [PMID: 15956166 DOI: 10.1001/archneur.62.6.953]

125 **Ghebremedhin E**, Schultz C, Thal DR, Rüb U, Ohm TG, Braak E, Braak H. Gender and age modify the association between APOE and AD-related neuropathology. *Neurology* 2001; **56**: 1696-1701 [PMID: 11425936 DOI: 10.1212/WNL.56.12.1696]

126 **Wharton W**, Gleason CE, Lorenze KR, Markgraf TS, Ries ML, Carlsson CM, Asthana S. Potential role of estrogen in the pathobiology and prevention of Alzheimer's disease. *Am J Transl Res* 2009; **1**: 131-147 [PMID: 19956426]

127 **Sherwin BB**. Estrogen and/or androgen replacement therapy and cognitive functioning in surgically menopausal women. *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 1988; **13**: 345-357 [PMID: 3067252 DOI: 10.1016/0306-4530(88)90060-1]

128 **Maki PM**, Zonderman AB, Resnick SM. Enhanced verbal memory in nondemented elderly women receiving hormone-replacement therapy. *Am J Psychiatry* 2001; **158**: 227-233 [PMID: 11156805 DOI: 10.1176/appi.ajp.158.2.227]

129 **Phillips SM**, Sherwin BB. Effects of estrogen on memory function in surgically menopausal women. *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 1992; **17**: 485-495 [PMID: 1484915 DOI: 10.1016/0306-4530(92)90007-T]

130 **Robinson D**, Friedman L, Marcus R, Tinklenberg J, Yesavage J. Estrogen replacement therapy and memory in older women. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 1994; **42**: 919-922 [PMID: 8064097 DOI: 10.1111/j.1532-5415.1994.tb06580.x]

131 **Henry JD**, Rendell PG. A review of the impact of pregnancy on memory function. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 2007; **29**: 793-803 [PMID: 18030631 DOI: 10.1080/13803390701612209]

132 **Janes C**, Casey P, Huntsdale C, Angus G. Memory in pregnancy. I: Subjective experiences and objective assessment of implicit, explicit and working memory in primigravid and primiparous women. *J Psychosom Obstet Gynaecol* 1999; **20**: 80-87 [PMID: 10422039 DOI: 10.3109/01674829909075580]

133 **de Groot RH**, Hornstra G, Roozendaal N, Jolles J. Memory performance, but not information processing speed, may be reduced during early pregnancy. *J Clin Exp Neuropsychol* 2003; **25**: 482-488 [PMID: 12911102 DOI: 10.1076/jcen.25.4.482.13871]

134 **Glynn LM**. Giving birth to a new brain: hormone exposures of pregnancy influence human memory. *Psychoneuroendocrinology* 2010; **35**: 1148-1155 [PMID: 20304563 DOI: 10.1016/j.psyneuen.2010.01.015]

135 **Henry JF**, Sherwin BB. Hormones and cognitive functioning during late pregnancy and postpartum: a longitudinal study. *Behav Neurosci* 2012; **126**: 73-85 [PMID: 21928875 DOI: 10.3233/JAD-122101]

136 **Henderson VW**. Estrogen, cognition, and a woman's risk of Alzheimer's disease. *Am J Med* 1997; **103**: 11S-18S [PMID: 9344402 DOI: 10.1007/s11910-010-0122-6]

137 **Hebert LE**, Wilson RS, Gilley DW, Beckett LA, Scherr PA, Bennett DA, Evans DA. Decline of language among women and men with Alzheimer's disease. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* 2000; **55**: P354-P360 [PMID: 11078105 DOI: 10.1093/geronb/55.6]

**P-Reviewer:** Frade JM **S-Editor:** Ji FF **L-Editor: E-Editor:**

**Table 1 Sex differences in studies assessing fluency and naming in the elderly**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Sample size** | | **MMSE** | | **Tasks** | **Finding** |
|  | **M** | **F** | **M** | **F** |  |  |
| **Marra *et al*[41]** | 85 | 168 | 19.1 | 17.6 | CF (fu)  CF (b) | NS  **M > F** |
| **Monsch *et al*[42]** | 43 | 46 |  | | LF (F, A, S)  CF (s, n)  CF (a + f + ve) | NS  NS  **F > M** |
| **Beinhoff *et al*[45]** | 26 | 23 | 25.6 | 24.7 | CF (a)  CN | NS  NS |
| **Henderson *et al*[46]** | 22 | 24 |  |  | CN | **M > F** |
| **Henderson *et al*[46]** | 270 | 377 | 17.5 | 17.3 | CF (a)  CN | **M > F**  **M > F** |
| **Moreno-Martinez *et al*[49]** | 28 | 33 | 21.2 | 18.9 | CF (I, tr, v, t, mi)  CF (a, fl, f, fu, k, c, bg, bp) | **M > F**  NS |
| **Randolph *et al*[53]** | 129 | 196 |  | | CN | **M > F** |
| **Buckwalter *et al*[55]** | 72 | 87 | 17.8 | 16.5 | CN | **M > F** |
| **McPherson *et al*[77]** | 23 | 36 | 23.3 | 22.2 | LF (F, A, S)  CF (a)  CN | NS  NS  **M > F** |
| **Ripich *et al*[78]** | 29 | 31 |  | | LF (F, A, S)  CN | NS  **M > F** |
| **Bayles *et al*[79]** | 30 | 33 | 15.2 | 15.9 | LF (A, S)  CF (a, f)  CN | NS  NS  NS |
| **Perneczky *et al*[81]** | 50 | 43 | 23.9 | 23.0 | CF (a)  CN | NS  **M > F** |
| **Henderson *et al*[136]** | 26 | 27 | 13.8 | 11.8 | LF (F, A, S)  CF (a)  CN | NS  NS  NS |

F: Female; M: Male; NS: Not significant; MMSE: Mini mental state examination; CF: Category fluency; CN: Confrontation naming; LF: Lexical fluency; CF categories: a: Animals; b: Birds; bg: Buildings; bp: Body parts; c: Clothing; f: Fruit; fl: Flowers; fu: Furniture; i: Insects; k: Kitchen utensils; mi: Musical instruments; n: First names; s: Supermarket items; t: Tools, tr: Trees; v: Vehicles; ve: Vegetables.

**Table 2 Studies assessing sex differences visuospatial abilities for Alzheimer’s disease patients**

|  | **Sample size** | | **MMSE** | |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **M** | **F** | **M** | **F** | **Tasks** | **Finding** |
| **Beinhoff *et al*[45]** | 26 | 23 | 25.6 | 24.7 | FC | **M > F** |
| **Henderson *et al*[46]** | 22 | 24 | Not given | | FC | NS |
| **Henderson *et al*[46]** | 270 | 377 | 17.5 | 17.3 | FC | NS |
| **Buckwalter *et al*[55]** | 72 | 87 | 17.8 | 16.5 | BD  FC | NS  NS |
| **Perneczky *et al*[81]** | 50 | 43 | 23.9 | 23.0 | FC | NS |
| **Cushman *et al*[90]** | 22 | 12 | 24.03 | | JLO | NS |
| **Heun *et al*[101]** | 171 | 267 | 15.5 | 16.3 | FC | **M > F** |
| **Millet *et al*[102]** | 20 | 20 |  |  | Corsi,  Corsi (b), VPT | NS  **M > F** |
| **Henderson *et al*[136]** | 26 | 27 | 13.8 | 11.8 | FC | NS |

M: Male; F: Female; NS: Not significant; MMSE: Mini mental state examination; BD: Block design; Corsi: Corsi block tapping; Corsi (b): Corsi block tapping (backwards); FC: Figure copying; JLO: Judgment of line orientation; VPT: Vecchi’s pathway task.

**Table 3 Cohen’s *d* effect sizes (95%CI) in different cognitive domains**

|  |  | **Sample size** | | | **Semantic** | **Non-semantic** | **Verbal** | **Visual-spatial** | **Memory** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **M** | **F** | **Total** | ***d*** | ***d*** | ***d*** | ***d*** | ***d*** |
| **Marra *et al*[41]** |  | 85 | 168 | 253 | -0.23 |  | -0.23 |  |  |
| **Beinhoff *et al*[45]** |  | 26 | 23 | 49 | -0.07 | -0.44 | -0.22 | -0.60 | -0.37 |
| **Hendersen *et al*[46]** |  | 22 | 24 | 46 | -0.37 | -0.37 | -0.37 | -0.18 |  |
| **Hendersen *et al*[46]** |  | 270 | 377 | 647 | -0.30 | -0.12 | -0.30 | -0.11 | -0.12 |
| **Moreno-Martinez *et al*[50]** |  | 28 | 33 | 61 | -0.42 |  | -0.42 |  |  |
| **Buckwalter *et al*[55]** |  | 72 | 87 | 159 | -0.46 | -0.24 | -0.46 | -0.24 |  |
| **McPherson *et al*[71]** |  | 23 | 36 | 59 | -0.24 | -0.54 | -0.35 |  | -0.71 |
| **Ripich *et al*[78]** |  | 29 | 31 | 60 | -0.74 |  | -0.74 |  |  |
| **Bayles *et al*[79]** |  | 30 | 33 | 63 | -0.10 |  | -0.10 |  |  |
| **Perneczky *et al*[81]** |  | 50 | 43 | 93 | -0.24 | -0.12 | -0.20 | 0.02 | -0.17 |
| **Heun *et al*[101]** |  | 17 | 76 | 93 |  | -0.18 |  | -0.62 | -0.04 |
| **Millet *et al*[102]** |  | 20 | 20 | 40 |  | -0.40 | 0.08 | -0.63 | -0.40 |
| **Laiacona *et al*[107]** |  | 11 | 15 | 26 | -0.29 |  | -0.29 |  |  |
| **Hendersen *et al*[136]** |  | 26 | 27 | 53 | -0.26 | -0.22 | -0.09 | -0.44 | -0.15 |
| **Hebert *et al*[137]** |  | 119 | 245 | 364 | -0.23 | 0.04 | -0.09 |  |  |
| **Total** |  | 828 | 1238 | 2066 | -0.25 (-0.42 to -0.07) | -0.14 (-0.26 to -0.02) | -0.27 (-0.37 to -0.16) | -0.24 (-0.43 to -0.05) | -0.17 (-0.33 to 0.01) |

Negativeeffect sizes favour men and positive effect sizes favour men; Numbers in parenthesis are 95%CIs. M: Male; F: Female.