

Are more men idiots? 'Darwin Awards' study examines gender differences in idiocy

Sex differences in mortality and admissions to hospital emergency departments have been well documented, and hypotheses put forward to account for these differences. These studies confirm that males are more at risk than females. Males are more likely to be admitted to an emergency department after accidental injuries, more likely to be admitted with a sporting injury, and more likely to be in a road traffic collision with a higher mortality rate. Some of these differences may be attributable to cultural and socioeconomic factors: males may be more likely to engage in contact and high risk sports, and males may be more likely to be employed in higher risk occupations. However, sex differences in risk seeking behaviour have been reported from an early age, raising questions about the extent to which these behaviours can be attributed purely to social and cultural differences.

However, there is a class of risk—the “idiotic” risk—that is qualitatively different from those associated with, say, contact sports or adventure pursuits such as parachuting. Idiotic risks are defined as senseless risks, where the apparent payoff is negligible or non-existent, and the outcome is often extremely negative and often final.

According to “male idiot theory” (MIT) many of the differences in risk seeking behaviour, emergency department admissions, and mortality may be explained by the observation that men are idiots and idiots do stupid things. There are anecdotal data supporting MIT, but to date there has been no systematic analysis of sex differences in idiotic risk taking behaviour.

Read full, original article: [The Darwin Awards: Sex differences in idiotic behaviour](#)