

Why COVID kills more men than women

For every 10 women claimed by [COVID] in the United States, [12 men have](#) died, found an analysis by Global Health 50/50, a U.K.-based initiative to advance gender equality in health care.

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But the specialized group of researchers who study that relationship was not surprised. It prepared an array of hypotheses. One possible culprit was male behavior. Perhaps men were more likely to be exposed to the virus due to social factors; a disproportionately male workforce, for instance, could place more men in contact with infected people. Or men's lungs might be more vulnerable because they were more likely to smoke in the earliest countries to report the differences.

What has become more evident, 10 months into this outbreak, is that men show comparatively weaker immune responses to coronavirus infections, which may account for those added deaths.

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Women generally have stronger immune systems, thanks to sex hormones, as well as chromosomes packed with immune-related genes. About 60 genes on the X chromosome are involved in immune function, Johns Hopkins University microbiologist Sabra Klein [told](#) The Washington Post in April. People with two X chromosomes can benefit from the double helping of some of those genes.

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