

Menstruation and evolution: The history of humanity has side-lined the role of women

A page-turning whistle-stop tour of mammalian development that begins in the Jurassic Era, “Eve” recasts the traditional story of evolutionary biology by placing women at its center.

The idea is that by examining how women evolved differently from men, [author Cat] Bohannon argues, we can “provide the latest answers to women’s most basic questions about their bodies.” These include, she says: Why do women menstruate? Why do they live longer? And what is the point of menopause?

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As she points out in “Eve,” antidepressants and pain medications are considered gender-neutral, despite evidence that they affect women differently than they do men. And it was only in 1999 that researchers began testing sex differences in the use of general anesthesia — discovering, as it happened, that “women wake up faster than men, regardless of their age, weight, or the dosage they’ve been given.”

“Women’s bodies have been under-studied and under-cared for,” Bohannon said, speaking via Zoom from her house in Seattle. “When we put the female body back in the frame, even people who don’t have female bodies have a better of idea of where we all stand in this huge evolutionary story.”

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)