

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Why should we discuss gender inequalities in Latin America and their effects in later life?

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Email: fabiana.ribeiro@uni.lu**Abstract**

Background: High inequalities in Latin America (LA) affect social groups differently, with women being disadvantaged in many domains. Further, dementia prevalence is higher and with earlier onset in LA, especially among women, after accounting for women's longer life expectancy. This narrative review discusses the modifiable risk factors of dementia established by previous studies and postulates further harmful, often hidden, factors experienced by women that might influence gender-specific time of onset and general prevalence of dementia.

Method: We searched databases for qualitative and quantitative articles systematising dementia-associated factors between genders/sexes in LA.

Result: We review hidden modifiable risk factors for late-life cognitive impairment that should be integrated into future research. In doing this, we point out pervasive gender roles around education, labour market participation, but also the distribution of resources within families and across generations. Gender roles affect family structure living conditions during childhood and extend their influence over the life course. Other stressors strongly correlated with established modifiable risk factors or intrinsically relevant to dementia risk seem to be commonplace in women's lives in LA, such as food insecurity, overweight/obesity, violence, and limited career opportunities.

Conclusion: Based on the evidence of gender inequalities in many domains to the disadvantage of women in LA, there is a need to consider unexplored risk factors since they could perpetuate burden of dementia among women disproportionately. Moreover, bringing hidden risk factors to open discussion can encourage and promote public policies to decrease gender inequalities and protect women's health and well-being.