



Gender-Specific Differences in Health Are Larger in the New EU Countries

- **“EHLEIS” study indicates significant differences between the EU-15 and new member states**
- **Possible causes are behaviours of men which are hazardous to health**
- **“Healthy life years” increasingly replacing “life expectancy” as an indicator of health**

The health-related differences between men and women are considerably larger in the new EU countries than in the old ones. While on average women are healthier and live longer than men in every country, the extent of the difference in this regard varies remarkably. In the coming years the study titled “European Health Life Expectancy Information System” (EHLEIS) discussed in the scope of the European Health Forum Gastein, the most important health policy conference for experts and decision-makers in the European Union, is to investigate in more detail possible reasons for these significant differences. The study is to be concluded by the end of June 2010.

“Life expectancy” as an indicator is less relevant as our population age. Interest is now moving to a more complex measure of “healthy life years” (HLY). Why the differences between men and women in the new EU countries are particularly large cannot be conclusively answered at this time, says Carol Jagger, professor of epidemiology and director of the Leicester Nuffield Research Unit at the University of Leicester. One possible reason may be the more hazardous lifestyle of men: heavier consumption of alcohol and nicotine, more accidents compared to women.

The poorer health in the new EU countries in general and the male population specifically is being addressed through a number of measures by the EU. One initiative for this is the “Task Force on Health Expectancies,” which was initiated by the EU Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection in 2005. Its aim is to improve the comparability of the data within the EU as well as internationally.

Press Service

EHFG Press Office

Thomas Brey

Mobile: +43 676 542 39 09

E-Mail: info@mbdialog.at