

The reasons for Novartis collaboration

For some years now, Novartis has been committed to developing a gender-specific outlook in clinical research and therapeutic approaches. The company's interest originated a number of years ago, from the consideration that women are the main users of the same medicinal products that have been tested, especially in the early phases of research, to a lesser extent in the female population. The knowledge that the two genders metabolise drugs differently is a factor of paramount importance to guaranteeing each patient effective therapeutic appropriateness, in order to guarantee everyone, both men and women, the best possible treatment.

Gender-specific medicine applies to biomedical research the concept of "gender diversity", meaning not only the differences concerning the individuals' sexual characteristics but also, and above all, the many particular characteristics that derive from both the different anatomy and physiology of men and women and from the factors associated with the environment, society, education, culture and psychology. Novartis was the first in Italy to conduct a study inspired by a gender-specific approach: the Gender Attention study, which focussed on gender-specific differences in tolerability amongst psoriatic patients being treated according to clinical practice. A number of analyses consistent with a gender-specific outlook are currently on-going or being published concerning 10000 patients previously involved in the various studies conducted by Novartis

on various illnesses. It is also running a pharmacoeconomics project evaluating the economic consequences for the health system of poor therapeutic appropriateness.

At a time when financial hardships also affect public health, such as that observed in Italy in recent years, greater therapeutic appropriateness means a lesser likelihood of mistakes or poor treatment efficacy and, consequently, a more sustainable utilisation of resources in the management of health. The latter is a key aspect for combining innovation with sustainability as part of a mature and responsible relationship with healthcare institutions.

It is with this in mind that Novartis is now collaborating with and sponsoring the *Italian Journal of Gender-specific Medicine*. A "platform" that aims to constitute a landmark for gender-specific medicine that is not merely scientific and clinical but that also dedicates special attention to political, social, cultural and legislative issues. The aim is to place increasing importance not merely on the innovation of therapeutic treatments, but also to the sustainability of the health system, which is a fundamental issue for both healthcare institutions and private businesses.

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