

'Man-Flu': It's real?

It's day six of the man-flu: my head pounds, body aches, and some foul demon is still sucking the marrow from my bones, so heavy are my limbs. Surprisingly, my wife who is "100-months pregnant" and may be going into labor at any moment has been mostly doting, urging rest so that I can pull the inevitable 'all-nighters' ahead with a new baby on the way.

Despite such loving attention, I still feel utterly pathetic. Images of the kindly pharmacist offering a flu shot that would take "just 5 minutes" (which I refused) keep dancing through my mind. I have regrets, I have been laid low.

Laid so low in fact that as briefly discussed with my son who shares my affliction, we would "be screwed" (his words) if ISIS rolled up in our yard and kicked the door down. I wouldn't even be able to wave them away, let alone get up and shut the door. As for fighting, no, that's certainly not happening.

Thankfully, Canadian doctor Kyle Sue has [declared](#) in the *British Medical Journal* that I am not being "a baby", as some in my household have alleged, but instead proposed that 'man-flu' is probably real. Dr. Sue attributes a man's inability to deal with the flu as well as a woman does to physiological differences between the sexes. Really.

'So it makes sense that we could differ in our responses to cold and flu viruses as well,' [Dr. Kyle Sue] added.

'I do think that the research does point towards men having a weaker immune response when it comes to common viral respiratory infections and the flu,' Sue [told Britain's Guardian newspaper](#). 'This is shown in the fact that they [have] worse symptoms, they last longer, they are more likely to be hospitalized and more likely to die from it.'

That's right, while I may be pathetic, it's not my fault and I'm not making it up. I am the victim of evolutionary biology.

...the author points out that mouse studies have suggested that testosterone could dampen immune response to influenza, while certain female sex hormones could boost it. What's more, some studies on a small group of humans revealed that cells from pre-menopausal women showed different immune responses to the type of virus behind the common cold to those of men of the same age – the difference was not seen when cells from men were compared to those of post-menopausal female peers.

The study also notes that research from the US showed men had higher rates of deaths linked to flu compared to women of the same age, while data from Hong Kong shows men had a higher risk of winding up in hospital with seasonal flu than women. It also pushes back against the idea that men crumble at the first sneeze – pointing to a study which found women were more likely than men to cut down activities when it came to minor respiratory illnesses.

Interesting. As there are biological differences between men and women, we probably shouldn't be too surprised by differences in experiences when it comes to diseases or other challenges. While they're not true 100% of the time, a lot of the differences men and women joke about are rooted in certain truths about our biological differences. Men often are from Mars and women often are from Venus.

And when it comes to the flu, men are either wimps or it's significantly worse for them.

Which gets my Dayquil-addled brain thinking about "gender studies" and a new direction the field could take. While people may associate "gender studies" with "social justice warriors", what's to stop a bunch of cis-gender, white, heteropatriarchy-types from taking over? Maybe the world would benefit from some folks digging into legitimate

questions of inequality as well as biological differences between the sexes and how that translates to culture and society.

Just think about how different such an approach would be to our current setup! Arguably, for a lot of today's intellectuals and educators, the apotheosis of our culture will be a perfect state of equality, something disturbingly close to Marx's 'workers' paradise'. With that as the assumed goal, as a society and culture we regularly attempt to force things that are forever different to be forever equal. Disturbingly, that's the mark of ideology, not truth-seeking. And it usually results in tremendous pain and suffering.

Ideology occurs when you have an idea or belief of how things should be and you attempt to force the world to conform to that belief. To seek the true and the good is entirely different. To do that, we must be willing to open our eyes to the reality around us and then to discern the laws that govern that reality and the patterns that exist. For example, are men and women *really* equal? Is there a 'form' of man and a 'form' of woman? What distinguishes the 'forms' from each other? What's best for each 'form'? Is the flu *really* worse for men? And so on and so on.

Those are all questions that have been asked and approaches taken many times in the history of the West, but not too often in recent memory. As one year ends and another begins, our culture seems to be more in the grips of intellectual ideologues than in the hands of truth-seekers. Maybe this year we will see a shift away from such a state, maybe we will see the rekindling of honest, curious thought and discourse. And maybe such honest inquiry leads to a male-oriented remedy for the flu – I can only hope.

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