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Gender, Reproductive Ageing, Adiposity, Fat Distribution and Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Spanish Women Aged 45-65

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ABSTRACT Recent results on cardiovascular diseases (CVD), cardiovascular risk factors (CVRF) and THS as a protective factor for CVD in middle aged and elderly women are changing traditional ideas, rising new interest in the ways in which sex and gender interact with environmental and cultural contexts and demanding more research on health with a gender approach. In this paper, besides age, menopausal status and adiposity markers, five different hormonal markers of reproductive ageing have been used to predict variation in CVRF (cholesterol, triglycerides, glucose, systolic and diastolic blood pressure), in a sample of 988 pre- and naturally postmenopausal Spanish women, aged 45-64 years. Adiposity, fat distribution and weight change explain a significant part of the variability founded in CVRF. Our main conclusions are: a) Women who smoke have significantly more elevated triglycerides compared with non-smokers. B) Menopausal status is not predictive of any cardiovascular risk factor after adjusting for age. C) weight change through reproductive age may be an important mediator of the observed increase of cardiovascular risk factors with age and also with menopause, since age at menopause has been show to increase with total adiposity, and increased weight change during reproductive life. More elaborated gender approaches are needed to explain the differences in medical perception of CVrisk, of CVdisease, for different diagnosis and treatment, and to understand the extensive use of hormone therapy for CVD prevention, despite recurrent evidences on its negative effects precisely on Heart.