

# Women's Health Research



## Importance of Quality Research

The gender gaps in science, medicine, and sport are well recognised and are unfortunately still real. Sport organisations and research institutions are working hard to bridge this gap, but the race to show progress can pose a significant risk to quality and meaningfulness of research.

Research on elite women's sport has got much better and we have now reached the point where any research is no longer better than no research. Poor-quality research that risks misinterpretation is not progress. New technologies that overpromise and underdeliver are not good enough. Catchy but unsubstantial phrases - like "train women as women" - are not progress. Women's sport should not be satisfied with only token efforts.

Trusted expertise, which is committed to the progress of women's sport exists (for example, the Centre of Excellence for Women in Sport) and should welcome engagement and challenging questions from athletes and sport organisations.

## How to tell if research can be trusted

Not all research is equal. A quick questionnaire to 12 people asking about feelings is nowhere near as good as well-designed scientific study covering 10,000 people carried out by a respected university with its findings published for review by other researchers.

As an athlete it's best and easier to ask trusted sources like your coach, governing body, player association, UKSI, or a university to get their opinion on any new research or claims.

High quality research tends to

- Be from an established university
- Be published in a peer reviewed journal
- Has a large sample size
- Contains a comparison (control) group as part of the research
- Be from researchers who are independent from the product being tested