



Encouraging girls into STEM could literally save your life.

A new study has found that if you have a female surgeon, you are less likely to die within a month of your operation.

Researchers, from the University of Toronto, looked at 104,630 patients who had surgery between 2007 and 2015.

Patients were matched to eliminate variables such as other conditions, age, sex, and income.

Surgeons were also matched in terms of age and experience, as well as the number of surgeries they perform and the hospital they work at.

With all variables accounted for, researchers found that female surgeons were better at keeping their patients alive during the 30 days following an operation.

“We don’t know the mechanism that underlies better outcomes for patients treated by female surgeons, although it might be related to delivery of care that is more congruent with guidelines, more patient-centered & involves superior communication.”

“Successful surgical practice has four core components: knowledge, communication skills, judgment, and technical proficiency.”

The research, published in the British Medical Journal, also found that fewer patients treated by female surgeons were readmitted to hospital within that timeframe, or had other complications.

The study found that patients who had been operated on by a female surgeon were 12% less likely to die during the following 30 days of recovery.

[Comparison of postoperative outcomes among patients treated by male and female surgeons: a population based matched cohort study.](#)

Study Statistics

- 104,630 patients
- 3,314 surgeons
- 774 female
- 2540 male

Patients undergoing one of 25 surgical procedures performed by a female surgeon were matched by patient age, patient sex, comorbidity, surgeon volume, surgeon age, and hospital to patients undergoing the same operation by a male surgeon.

Population based cohort of all patients treated in Ontario, Canada.

Surgeries included, coronary bypass, abdominal aneurysm repair, appendectomy, gastric bypass, hysterectomy, brain surgery, knee replacement, hip replacement, thyroidectomy, prostate resection, carpal tunnel release, and breast reduction.

What was already known

Female and male physicians differ in their practice of medicine in ways that might substantially affect patient outcomes.

Despite the better odds of surviving, surgery is still a male dominated profession.

“Gender equity in the surgical profession, including disparities in compensation and promotion, is a growing concern.”