



Men and women: Are we wired differently?

Research shows gender affects how our brains work. Dr. Ruben Gur of the University of Pennsylvania studies the differences. Take his test and see

Today show

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Men may not be from Mars and women may not be from Venus, but that doesn't mean the sexes have the same wiring. Dr. Ruben Gur and his wife, Dr. Raquel Gur, two of the world's premier experts on gender differences in the human brain, have been studying men and women for more than 30 years. The neuroscientists were the first to show, with brain imaging methods, that the sexes may not have the same hard wiring, after all.

"A lot of the differences between men and women are related to how they are built rather than how they are taught," says Dr. Ruben Gur who works with his wife at the Brain Behavior Center of the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Psychiatry.

Using an MRI scanner, the couple monitors how the brains of males and females react when their volunteers are instructed to answer emotional, verbal, and spatial questions. "Estrogen and progesterone are likely to be important factors when we talk about biological differences, but it is likely to go even beyond that," says Dr. Raquel Gur.

For TODAY, Dr. Nancy Snyderman asked the doctors to use their MRI test on her and her husband, Doug, to see if their brains work differently. The results were, well, mind opening.

It turns out that Dr. Snyderman was able to decipher someone's emotions from his facial expressions much more easily than Doug. His brain had to work harder.

Do you think you and your partner also think differently?

If you would like to participate in the doctors' study, you can take a test. Just click on the link below. Dr. Gur created a test especially for TODAY viewers. The test asks spatial and emotional questions. He will release the results during the first week of January on the study's page. So check back next year to see how the show's are wired.

The doctors believe this research will help them figure out how certain mental illnesses can be diagnosed and treated in the early stages. They are particularly interested in depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), schizophrenia, autism, Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease.

We know less about the brain than probably any other organ in the body. This kind of research may change that.

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