

## Background

Higher prevalence & incidence rates regarding unipolar depressive disorder in women compared to men are among the recurring findings from epidemiological & clinical studies [1]. The literature suggests that this is not due to a lower need for treatment in men [2]. In the context of the concept MD it is argued that men tend to have 'non-typical' depressive symptoms [3, 4]. These symptoms (like aggressiveness, irritability, consumption of alcohol, risk & antisocial behavior) are little considered in a diagnosis of depression, which may lead to an underdiagnosis [2]. With regard to symptoms & the concept of MD the importance of masculine personality traits is often discussed [2, 3, 4]. **To what extent gender-related personality traits (masculine, feminine, undifferentiated, androgynous) are associated with the severity of 'non-typical' & 'typical' depressive symptoms in women & men will be the question.**

## Methods & Sample

Depressive symptoms (GMDS & BDI II) & gender-related personality traits (GEPAQ) were assessed in female & male patients (≥ 18 years) with an unipolar depressive disorder (F32-/F33.-, ICD-10). Participants were recruited from inpatients settings or day clinics of specialized psychiatric-psychotherapeutic hospitals in Germany. The multicenter study with a cross-sectional design has been completed. Data from the clinical sample were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis.

**table 1: sample characteristic**

characteristics	women n = 446 (55 %)	men n = 359 (45 %)	p
age, mean (sd)	36 (15)	39 (14)	** a
setting	inpatient (n = 411, 51 %)	243 (55 %)	* b
	day clinic (n = 394, 49 %)	203 (45 %)	
main diagnosis (ICD-10)	F32.- (n = 282, 35 %)	149 (33 %)	n.s. b
	F33.- (n = 523, 65 %)	297 (67 %)	
gender-related personality traits	feminine (n = 167, 22 %)	127 (30 %)	*** b
	masculine (n = 126, 16 %)	53 (12 %)	
	undifferentiated / androgynous (n = 474, 62 %)	246 (58 %)	

**note:** sd = standard deviation; <sup>a</sup> t-Test; <sup>b</sup>  $\chi^2$ -Test; \**p*<.05; \*\**p*<.01; \*\*\**p*<.001

## Results

**table 2: multiple linear regression analysis, results**

predictor: gender-related personality traits (median split method)	criteria: sum score GMDS (model 1)				criteria: sum score BDI II (model 2)			
	women n = 426 corrected R <sup>2</sup> = .0023		men n = 341 corrected R <sup>2</sup> = .0134		women n = 426 corrected R <sup>2</sup> = .0086		men n = 341 corrected R <sup>2</sup> = .0291	
	b-coeff	s.e.	b-coeff	s.e.	b-coeff	s.e.	b-coeff	s.e.
feminine	.36	.64	1.44	.98	1.27	1.02	.91	1.63
masculine	-1.29	.89	-1.37*	.77	-2.33	1.41	-4.19**	1.28
constant	25.23	.37	23.61	.38	33.96	.59	32.09	.63

**note:** \**p*<.05; \*\**p*<.01

*constant:* undifferentiated or androgynous personality traits

*GMDS, cutoff:*

0-12 = no depression  
13-19 = depression possible  
20-39 = clear signs for depression

*BDI II, cutoff:*

0-13 = no depression  
14-19 = mild depression  
20-28 = moderate depression  
29-63 = severe depression

**Depressive symptom severity:** Both women & men express 'non-typical' (GMDS) as well as 'typical' depressive symptoms (BDI II), symptom severity being higher in women than in men.  
**Gender-related personality traits:** Majority express undifferentiated or androgynous personality traits. More women than men express feminine personality characteristics. More men than women express masculine personality traits (**table 1**).  
**Gender-related personality traits & depressive symptom severity:** In women, gender-related personality traits seem not be related to depressive symptom severity (**table 2**). Masculine personality traits seem to be related to depressive symptom severity in men. The expression of more masculine personality traits is associated with a reduction in depressive symptom severity in men (**table 2**).

## Conclusion

**Gender-related personality traits do not appear to be related to depressive symptom severity, except masculine personality traits in men. Against previous theoretical assumptions of the concept MD, masculine personality traits does not lead to an increase in depressive symptoms, especially not in 'non-typical' depressive symptoms. Furthermore women & men with a diagnosis of depression have both symptoms, 'non-typical' & 'typical'. Both types of symptoms should be considered in the diagnosis & treatment of depression. Symptom severity is higher in women. This is also against the theoretical assumptions of the concept MD.**  
 In the linear regression analysis the coefficient of determination is very low. This could be an indication that gender-related personality traits are not sufficient to explain gender effects in depressive symptom severity. A more comprehensive evaluation of the study also examined the influence of further personality aspects like aggressiveness, irritability, emotionality & burden. These personality aspects take on greater meaning for depressive symptom severity in women & men than gender-related personality traits.

### References

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