FIND
Diagnosis for all

WOMEN'S HEALTH & DIAGNOSTICS

In general, women require more diagnostic tests throughout their lives due to reproductive health needs, pregnancy, and childbirth. Yet, in the health systems of many resource-constrained countries, the availability of these essential tests is often lacking. Limited access to diagnostic testing – due to economic, sociocultural, and gender inequalities and barriers, coupled with limited availability of diagnostics – severely impacts women's health.

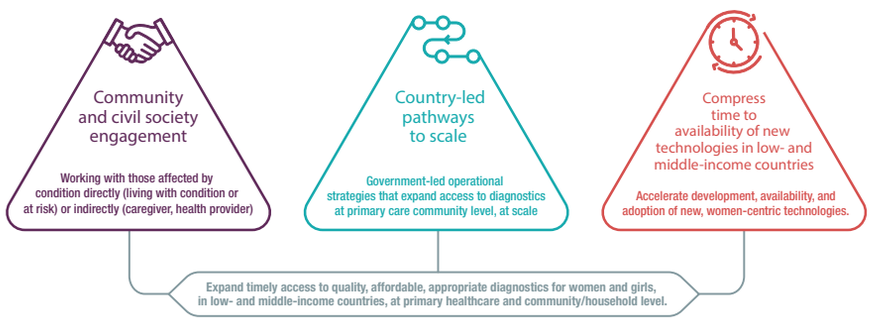
While medicine has long recognized that men and women differ physiologically, it is only comparatively recently that medicine has come to focus on the significant differences in the pathophysiology of disease – the physical and functional changes that occur during a disease process – between men and women, beyond those that specifically involve the reproductive system. Well over half of the burden of disease that affects women comes from health conditions that are either more prevalent in women and/or manifest differently in women. Compared to men - who die younger on average – women spend 25 percent more of their lives on average in poor health and with degrees of disability.

Diagnostics for women – including those specifically targeted at diseases and conditions affecting women exclusively or disproportionately – have lagged behind in several different ways. Until recently, most basic and clinical research either was performed exclusively in male subjects or included both sexes but did not differentiate between males and females in the data analysis. Systematic bias in both the application of diagnostic tools and in diagnostic assessments between men and women is far too common.

This mismatch between women's health needs and the diagnostics they receive is what we call the sex-diagnostic gap – a systemic failure to develop and deploy diagnostic tools that meet the specific needs of women. This gap leads to delayed or missed diagnoses, inadequate treatment, and preventable deaths.

OUR APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION – AND IMPACT

Our approach to implementation is centred on deep collaboration based on a comprehensive and shared strategy – including work to integrate diagnostics in national health policies and budgets; work to train healthcare workers to deliver women-centred diagnostic care; and work to standardize gender-sensitive data and impact measurement.



WHY PARTNER WITH FIND?

FIND is uniquely positioned to close the gender diagnostic gap. We bring:

- A full diagnostic value chain approach – from R&D to delivery
- Cross-sectoral partnerships with governments, industry, and civil society that have driven implementation in over 50 countries.
- A commitment to co-creation with local actors and gender equity

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FIND'S INTERVENTIONS AND IMPACT

Some of our interventions to address the diagnostic gap and improve women's health and access to diagnostic tools and services include:

- In **SOUTH AFRICA, KENYA,** and **BANGLADESH,** FIND conducted a clinical study showing that self-collected vaginal swabs for high-risk HPV testing can be transported dry – removing the need for costly liquid media. This solution supports equitable, cost-effective cervical cancer screening, particularly for women in LMICs who prefer self-collection. The study reflects FIND's commitment to designing tools with and for end users.
- In **VIET NAM,** FIND developed and evaluated an integrated HPV DNA testing model within primary health care. Decentralized sample collection and centralized testing, enabled by efficient transport and digitization resulted in high acceptance (95–100%) among women. With 77% willing to co-pay, the model shows strong potential for national scale-up. FIND's approach ensured tools were practical, scalable, and grounded in real-world health system dynamics.
- In **INDIA,** FIND led stakeholder consultations to address barriers to cervical cancer screening. These engagements – across sectors and communities – produced a recommended state-led strategy focused on innovation, inter-departmental coordination, and advocacy. By involving diverse voices early, FIND helped align national policy with community needs and WHO elimination targets.
- In **SOUTH AFRICA** and **ZIMBABWE,** FIND field-tested a new rapid, low-cost Neisseria gonorrhoea (NG) test developed with DCN Dx. The test demonstrated high performance and usability among symptomatic women and men and is now ready for technology transfer and local production. FIND's evaluations prioritize accessibility, accuracy, and user feedback. Chlamydia trachomatis (CT) is another sexually transmitted infection, one which is difficult to diagnose in women but which carries a risk of significant complications, including a risk of infertility. A companion CT test developed with the same principles, is underway.
- In **INDONESIA** and **KYRGYZSTAN,** FIND assessed the usability of multiplex self-tests for HIV and hepatitis B/C among people who inject drugs and healthcare workers. These tools have the potential to offer private, at-home, integrated testing for key populations – especially women. By involving end users throughout, FIND is guiding the equitable, real-world introduction of innovative diagnostics.
- In **KENYA,** FIND is using structured listening exercises to ensure women's lived experiences inform policy, product design, and access models. Insights gathered help adapt tools for primary health care, shape how innovations are scaled, and build trust – especially where uptake has been historically low. Too often, diagnostics are developed without asking women what works for them. FIND's model makes women co-creators in shaping where and how care is delivered, embedding user engagement into every phase of the diagnostic ecosystem.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US

This is a call to funders, governments, implementers, and innovators: If you care about making an impact on women's health, then diagnostics must be part of your solution.

WHAT'S NEXT

OUR PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

By investing in tools designed for women across the life course, our work on women's health and diagnostics aims to close the gender diagnostic gap by expanding the availability of high-quality, affordable and accessible diagnostics for women, with a focus on:

Self-care interventions for autonomy and access
– diagnostics, devices and digital solutions that support health awareness, self-assessment, self-monitoring, self-sampling/self-collection and self-testing.

Conditions unique to women
– solutions that address high-burden, underdiagnosed conditions such as breast and cervical cancer, female genital schistosomiasis, pre-eclampsia, and HIV and malaria in pregnancy.

Conditions disproportionately affecting or presenting differently in women
– solutions that address conditions such as anaemia, sexually transmitted infections.

About FIND

Established in 2003, FIND is a global nonprofit dedicated to ensuring equitable access to diagnostics, based in Geneva, Switzerland, but also has regional offices in India, Kenya, South Africa, and Viet Nam.

We connect countries and communities, funders, decision-makers, healthcare providers and developers to spur diagnostic innovation and make testing an integral part of sustainable, resilient health systems.

For more than 20 years, FIND has been at the forefront of revolutionizing diagnostics, particularly in the realm of infectious diseases, bringing lower-cost, quality diagnosis to those who need it as an essential component of universal health care while also leading efforts in pandemic preparedness, and driving access to essential tools as a recognized thought leader.