**EMAS - presentation WOMEN Inc.**

Focus: Jannet Vaessen, director of WOMEN Inc., will give a presentation about gender differences in healthcare, to put the subject on the agenda of gynecologists, scientists and healthcare professionals present on May 22. The focus will be on gender differences within different diseases, the way in which awareness among both professionals and the public can help to make healthcare gender sensitive and the effect gender sensitive healthcare can have on women’s quality of life. Jannet will also talk shortly about our intention to create a programme around the effect of hormones on women’s lives, in which we will focus on puberty, pregnancy and menopause.

**Jannet Vaessen – Treat me like a lady**

Summary:WOMEN Inc. is the network for all women who want to empower themselves and each other. As an organization, WOMEN Inc. advocates for gender-specific healthcare. Even though women live longer than men on average, they spend fewer years in good health. This is because healthcare is primarily based on the male body.  
 Many medications and treatments are only tested on white men or male test animals, which can cause unexpected side effects in women. Thus, there is less knowledge available about the female body and female-specific symptoms of diseases that occur in both men and women. This makes some diseases harder to recognize in women in an early stage.

*Gender differences in chronic disease*  
To reduce these differences in health between men and women, WOMEN Inc. established the Alliance Gender & Health in 2012, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. This collaboration of doctors, scientists, policy makers and healthcare professionals recognizes the importance of gender sensitivity in order to improve the quality of health.

Big differences and knowledge gaps exist around chronic diseases such as: cardiovascular disease, migraine, rheumatism, autism, ADHD, anxiety and depression, and more. For example, doctors usually call women’s complaints ‘a-typical’ and heart attacks are less likely to be recognized in women.

*Awareness among health professionals and the public*In 2015, the Knowledge Agenda was published: an overview of the existing knowledge and gaps in knowledge in the field of gender in health. In March 2016, we organized an event at the CORPUS Congress Centre, where over 400 health professionals, policy makers and patients pleaded for gender sensitive healthcare. The ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports announced at this event that they would grant 12 million euros for research on women’s health, which will be invested in the National Knowledge Program Gender & Health in the coming years.  
 With the public campaign ‘Treat me like a lady’, WOMEN Inc. achieved widespread awareness of the topic: 2.2 million women support the campaign online. It also won the bronze Effie Award, for the most effective marketing communications idea.

The next few years, WOMEN Inc. will continue to put the issue on the agenda, because ignorance about the female body still threatens lives. We strive for the implementation of gender sensitive healthcare, so that the quality of life will improve for women.