

Second Year
Sex, Gender and Medicine
Seminar
Lecture 1: Definitions

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First order of business...

Please tell me what these two concepts mean to you:

1. 'gender'
2. 'a gender perspective in medicine'

Sex, Gender and Medicine Seminar

Friday 3rd of September 9am-12pm

Time	Topic	Presenter
9.00	Sex, Gender and Medicine: Definitions	Ann-Maree Nobelius
9.35	Masculinity and Men's Health	Associate Professor Rob McLachlan (andrologist)
9.55	Gender and Evidence	Ann-Maree Nobelius
10.30	Medicine and Power (Blokes in Suits)	Dr Chris Wright (ICU/MMC)
10.50	Break	
11.20	Gender of the practitioner and professional boundaries	Dr James Brown (rural GP)
11.40	Gender Mainstreaming and Monash	Ann-Maree Nobelius

What we are going to cover today

- The difference between Sex and Gender
- A Gender Perspective in Medicine
- Gender blindness and its clinical consequences
- Gender in Monash curriculum and assessment
- Ways to get the info you need
- Exam question

Definitions

What is the difference between sex and gender?

- Sex = male and female
- Gender = masculine and feminine

SEX

- biological differences
- chromosomes
- hormonal profiles
- internal and external sex organs

Gender

- qualities that a society or culture delineates as *masculine* or *feminine*

It's culturally defined

'man' = male + masculine social role

a real 'man', 'masculine' or 'manly'

'woman' = female + feminine social role

a real 'woman', 'feminine' or 'womanly'

Examples of *sex difference* between *males* and *females* are:

- on average female brains exhibit greater 'plasticity', male brains are larger and have more neurons
- males experience an increase in blood pressure in response to pain, females, an increase in heart rate, but blood pressure remains stable, or may even fall
- high blood pressure in males increases the size of the left ventricle, in females the chamber does not enlarge, but the muscle of the chamber wall thickens

Examples of *gender differences* between *men* and *women* are:

- in Australia men get melanoma more commonly on the back and shoulders, women more commonly on the lower leg
- in Australia men experience high rates of accident and injury including suicide women suffer more depression
- globally women use 2/3 of health services, men use health services at a much lower rate

Sex or Gender Differences?

- in Australia rates of cancer are higher in males than in females
- women live approximately 5 years longer than men
- a variety of risk behaviours contribute to poorer health status in men than women

If you know that the difference is

100% biological
it's a *Sex Difference*

Everything else must be considered a

Gender Difference

(...because you can't separate people from their
environment)

When are the terms commonly Misused

- When causality is unclear
- Social 'discretion' on public documentation
- Linguistic and social association of 'gender' with 'women's issues'
- Over interpretation in policy or programme documentation
- Medical Literature

A gender perspective

- Is multidimensional because all players in the healthcare process have a gender
- That gender impacts on how you behave in the world...no escaping it
- A gender perspective acknowledges the role gender plays and works with it, not against it
- The result is gender competence

A gender perspective of...

- **medical evidence** acknowledges the clinical consequences of gender blind medical research and the resulting medical evidence
- **the patient** acknowledges the differential roles that masculinity and femininity play in men's and women's health
- **the doctor** acknowledges the ways in which the sex or gender of the provider impacts on the consultation
- **medical education** identifies the gendered nature of medical education/texts/teaching styles and environments
- **clinical practice** acknowledges the way in which the sex or gender of the patient impacts on clinical testing, diagnostics, treatment and outcomes

...and this list is by no means complete