

Gender/Expert

The factor "gender"

In societies, we function through learned behaviors. How we speak and behave, the things we use and how we relate to one another all signalize who we are and contribute to the development of rules for interaction. The term gender is an aspect in this conglomerate of behaviors and attitudes and describes all social aspects of an individual. ^[1]

Gender refers to a gender-specific distribution of roles and is conditioned by a multitude of socio-cultural and environmental factors such as social systems, family structures, cultural practices of child rearing and educational values. In addition to the socio-cultural factors, strongly variable interpersonal factors such as physical activity, occupational choice, diet, or trauma can significantly impact gender roles. Gender can be viewed from a social, societal, cultural or psychological perspective thus creating a multidimensional influence on the development and course of disease.

One example would be the following: men because of their social role, are more likely than women to work in professions which involve heavy physical labor, an increased risk of accidents or exposure to pathogenic noxious agents. Men also demonstrate a risk taking in their personal lives which can manifest through dangerous driving styles (studies show significantly more males involved in traffic accidents) or participating in dangerous sports. Women, on the other hand, endure an increased burden stemming from simultaneous family and professional challenges and an overall feeling that no one is satisfied. It is crucial to understand the term gender is not seen as separate from sex. Rather, in medicine, we see a lifelong interaction on a biological and social level that plays a significant role in most diseases. ^{[2] [3]}

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Literature

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2. Kindler-Röhrborn A, Pfleiderer B. Gendermedizin - Modewort oder Notwendigkeit?: - Die Rolle des Geschlechts in der Medizin. XX 2012; 1(03):146-52.
3. The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development. Gender and Health: Knowledge Agenda. The Hague; 2015.

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