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**

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