Men die quicker, women get sicker

Why is that?

ZonMw works with knowledge to realise good health for everybody. Including for all sexes and genders.

Read on to find out

- why it is important to integrate sex and gender into research
- how you can get started accounting for sex and gender in your research

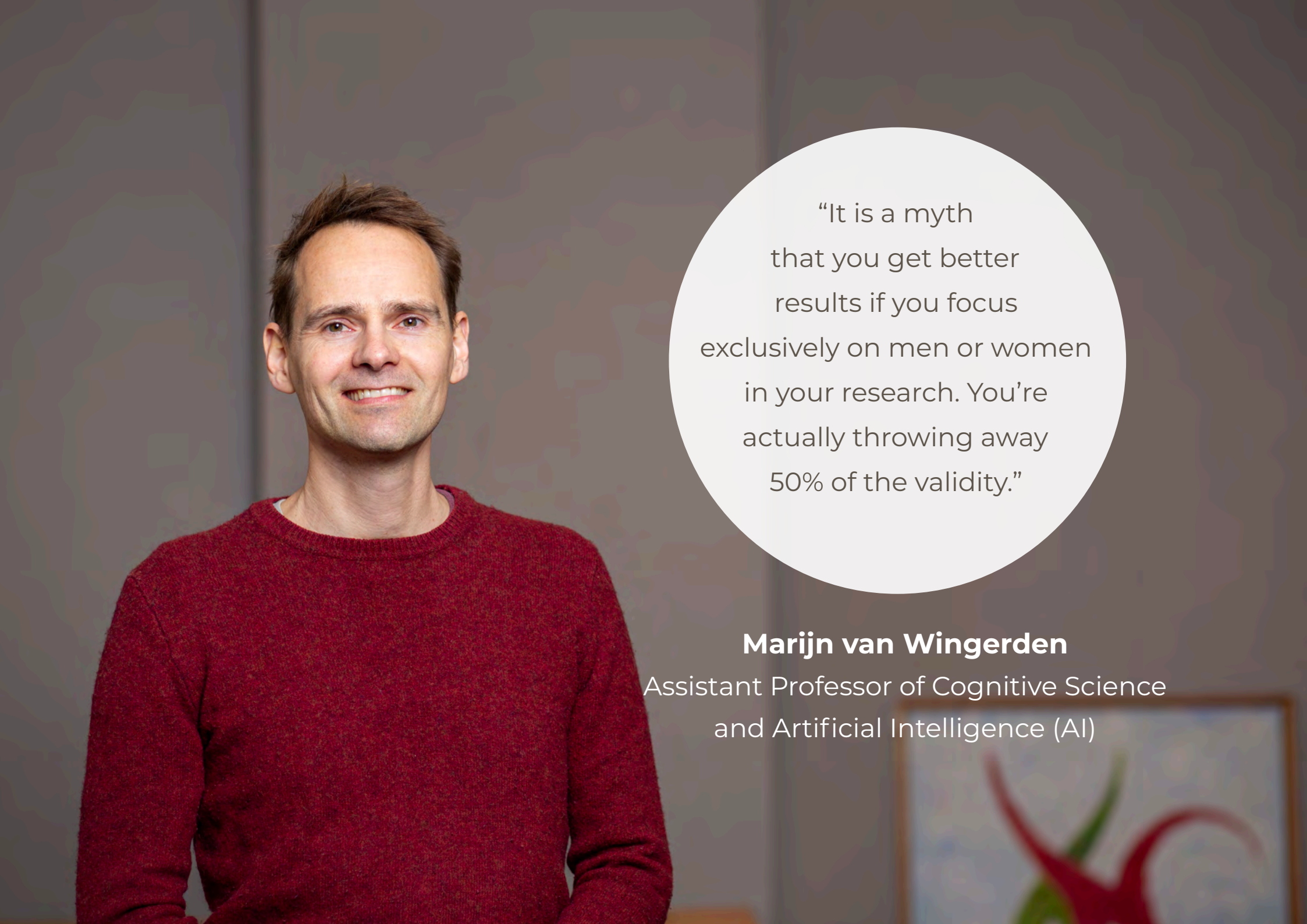
"ZonMw is committed to fostering research programming that adequately accounts for the influence of sex, gender and diversity. With our gained experience, we want to act as a role model for other funding bodies."

Arfan Ikram
President of ZonMw, Professor and Chair of Epidemiology

"Dementia can
have different impacts on
the lives of the people it affects.

If at every stage of research we take
into account differences like gender,
migration background,
socioeconomic status, and so on,
our results will have impact on
all levels of society."

Jet Bussemaker
Professor and Chair of the
programme committee of
the Dementia Research
Programme



“It is a myth
that you get better
results if you focus
exclusively on men or women
in your research. You’re
actually throwing away
50% of the validity.”

Marijn van Wingerden
Assistant Professor of Cognitive Science
and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

"Look
at suicide, for
example. We know that
women attempt suicide more of-
ten than men, but fatal suicide
attempts occur more often in men.
A man's suicide is still often a complete
surprise to those in his social circle.
Both family members and professionals
rather think of men having an alcohol
problem, overlooking underlying
conditions like depression."

Margreet de Looze
Assistant Professor of
Interdisciplinary Social Science

"Researchers often put things into gendered boxes of 'man' and 'woman'. Young people think in a less binary way. I believe that researchers should take account of this and have the courage to transcend binary categories."

Colin Kouffeld
Panel member of the
National Youth Council

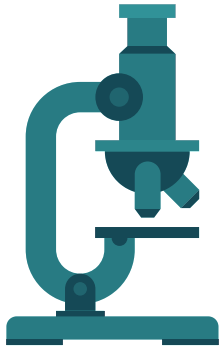
“It has taken me 20 years to finally find out what is wrong with me. I never gave up on my quest, but I have suffered a great deal because of it.

We still don’t know enough about women’s bodies. I hope that we can learn more through research, so that women can receive a diagnosis sooner. Because only with a diagnosis can women receive the care they need.”

Linda Balk
Experiential expert in PMDD

In short:

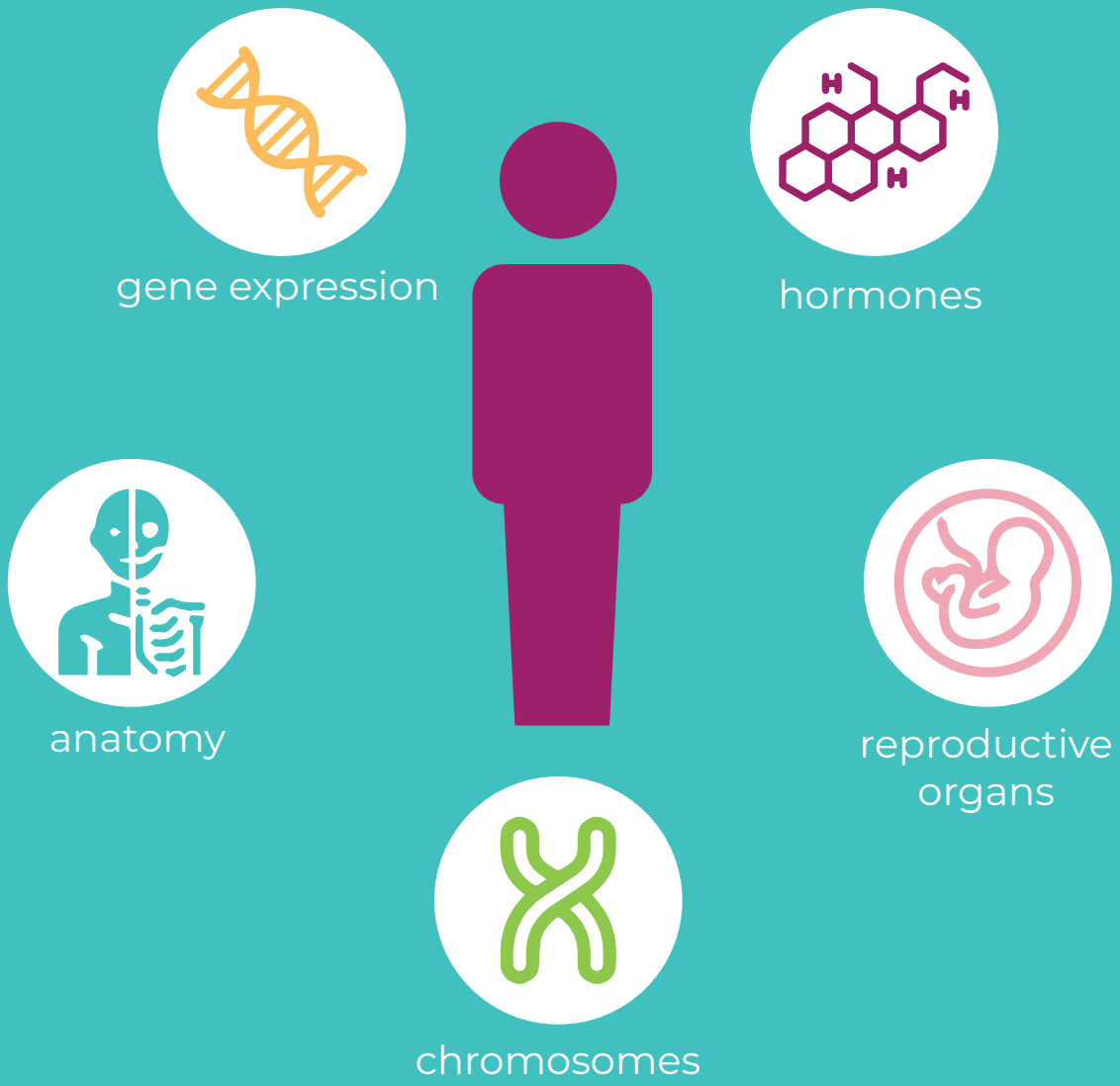
Sex and gender differences matter in the quest for high quality, appropriate health care for everyone.



That is why research must consider the influence of sex and gender on health and health care.

SEX

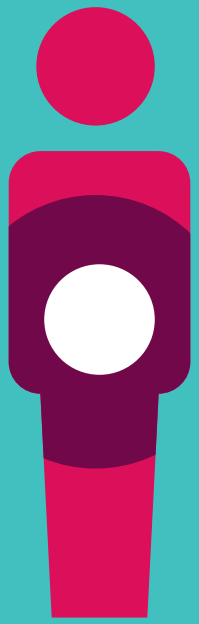
The biological and physiological differences between human beings and between animals.



GENDER

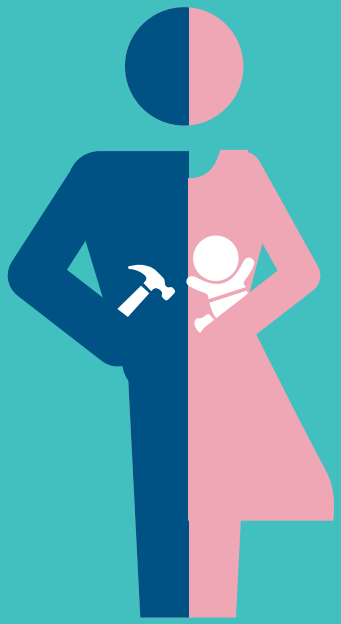
The socioculturally determined differences between human beings.

Gender Identity



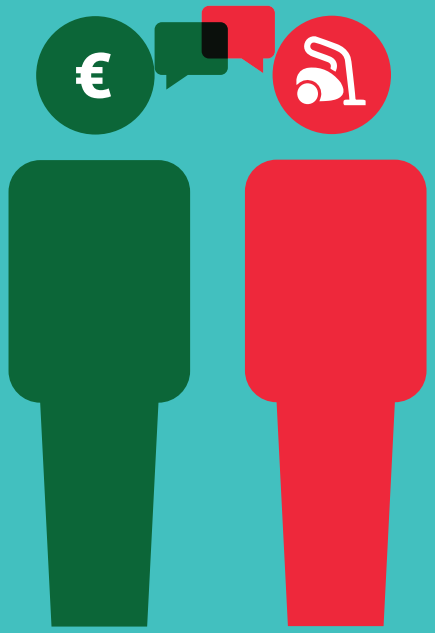
The feeling each person has internally of being male, female, both or neither.

Gender Roles



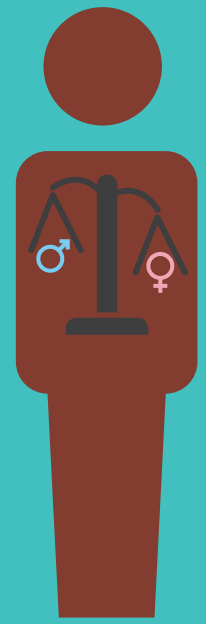
Society's expectations and ideas about **what is typically associated with being a man or a woman.** This influences such things as daily behaviour, one's role in the family and the choice of education or career.

Gender Relations



Interactions between people, such as group dynamics or task assignment within a family or at a workplace.

Institutionalised Gender



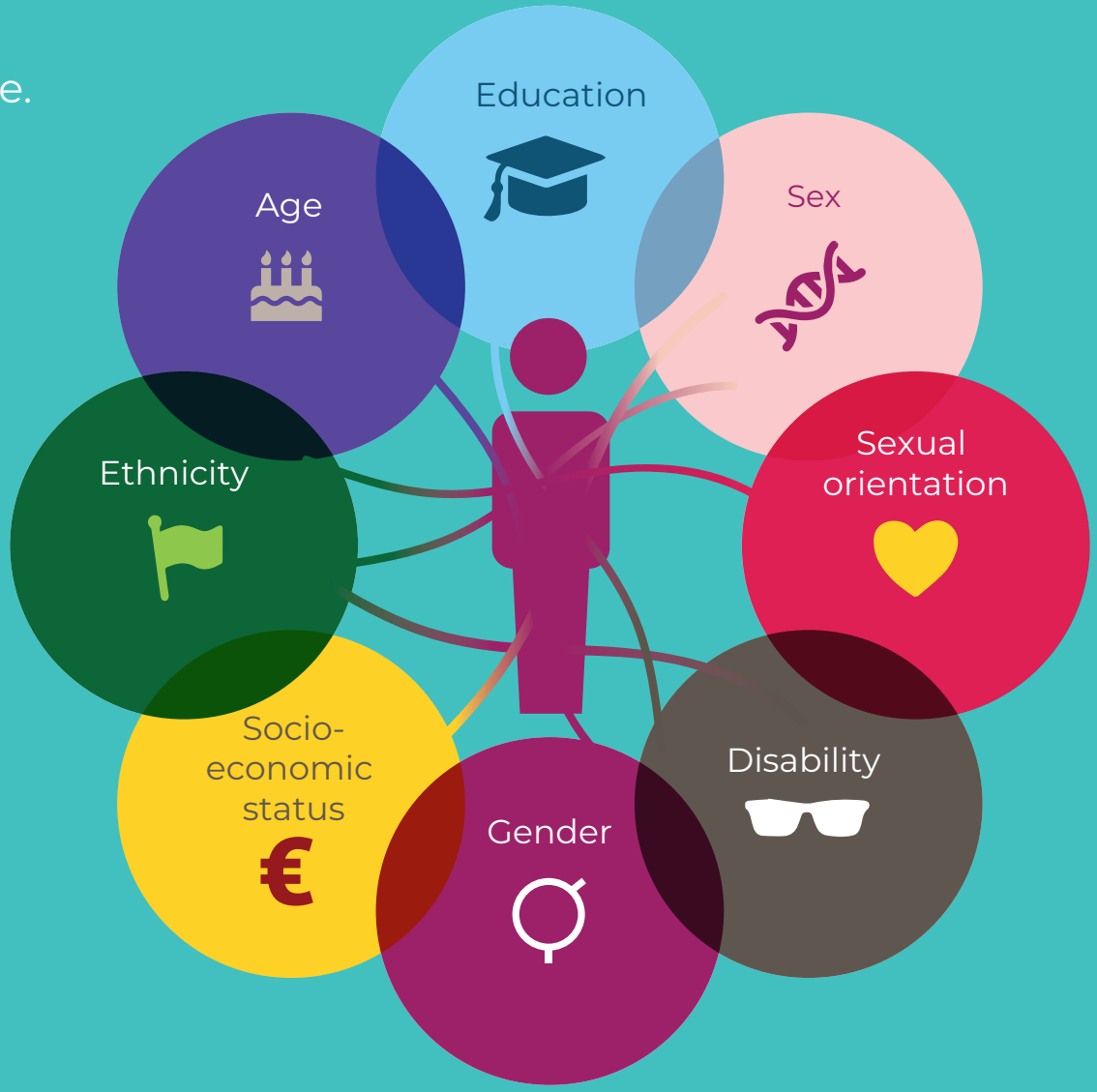
Distribution of power and resources, e.g. in politics, education, and social institutions in society.

DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

The biological, sociocultural and socioeconomic differences between people.

Various dimensions of diversity can intersect and interact with each other to create inequalities.

Intersectionality refers to how different systems of inequality reinforce each other.



Integrating sex, gender and diversity into research raises the reproducibility, scientific quality, social relevance and scientific ethic (equal opportunity) of the study or project.

Would you
like to improve the quality and
relevance of your grant application?

Tips for researchers

These tips have been compiled from information provided by the Institute of Gender and Health of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and from Gendered Innovations at Stanford University.

1. Find out what is known about sex and/or gender in your field of research. Review the published national and international literature on the subject, for example.

2. If you do not include sex and/or gender or choose to investigate one sex only, it is important that you justify this approach in your application.

3. Indicate how you would operationalise sex and/or gender in a way suitable to the research question.

4. Ensure that you have a good representation of both men and women in your sample, so that meaningful (statistical) analyses are possible. Where necessary, engage a statistician for the project well in advance.

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Men and women may well have different reasons for participating in a study. It may also be harder to find the male or female target group. In your recruitment strategy, take account of male-female differences in order to obtain the numbers necessary for your sample.

6

Include outcome measures that are sensitive and responsive to sex and/or gender differences.

Consider for example things like the risk of weight gain when giving up smoking, and what kind of role this plays in the decision to stop smoking. Therefore, ask both male and female patients for their input in your research design, so that both perspectives are incorporated into your investigation.

7

Design a method of analysis that takes account of sex and/or gender differences.
Consider for example things like analyses that are differentiated or stratified according to sex, alternatives to animal testing analyses (PAD), or the use of sex and/or gender variables as interaction variables or as confounder.

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Disaggregate the results on the basis of sex and/or gender and report on the findings, even if no difference is found.

9

Include someone in the project group who has experience investigating sex and/or gender in the research field.

10

Depending on the findings, it may be important to differentiate between men and women (or subgroups within these) for knowledge transfer and the dissemination of results. Consider for example things like modifying the form or contents of the message or product, or the places where you will be actively disseminating the results.

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Men die quicker, women get sicker

Why is that?

The e-book demonstrates that this problem is a challenging puzzle to solve.

Can you help us to solve this problem?

Get started and raise the quality and relevance of research.

Work with us to create high-quality, appropriate health care for everyone.

Click here for more information

What first step will you take?

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