



Policy Brief 4

Gendered Politics

María Cristina Quevedo-Gómez MD
Maastricht University, Netherlands

Gendered Politics

- The health care system fails gender equity from the perspective of women and men as both consumers (users) and producers (carers)
 - Important barriers are lack of awareness and lack of acknowledgement that something should and can be done about the health problem
- Health sector reforms that take gender into consideration can therefore have fundamental consequences for gender equality in aspects beyond health and wellbeing
- The various levels of the health care system must be examined to fully understand gender equity
 - The content and structure of the official knowledge in medical and health care courses and curriculums are important
 - Understanding how the knowledge of bodies, health, and illness is produced and how dominant cultural messages about this knowledge is internalised and applied to life is important

Steps for Policy Action

1) Encourage disaggregated data by sex to provide a more complete picture of health

- The availability of sex-disaggregated data could help to plan, monitor and evaluate successful gender-sensitive interventions in the work place
 - Women represent a significant proportion of workers in the health services sector
 - The concentration of women in low paid and part-time jobs, their specific working conditions their major responsibility for family care and household work might determine the higher prevalence of stress related disorders in women
- Methods for health workforce analysis developed in relation to predominately male employment sectors, should be validated and extended for analyses of women's jobs
- Recognise and develop solutions for gender issues at work places
- The inclusion of gender and its relevance to the effectiveness of health interventions in the curriculum and continuous training of all health professionals is crucial to better health care for all

Steps for Policy Action

2) Encourage collaboration between sectors for better policy development

- Recognise the need of legislation for strategic solutions and for collaboration among different sectors and policymakers nationally
- Include civil society and NGOs in the decision-making processes of collaborative efforts
 - These groups are often the first to reveal unrecognised problems and to develop new approaches and their expertise should be recognised need for information on healthcare utilisation

Steps for Policy Action

3) Support health care services and other services to develop gender-sensitive approaches

- Men and women utilise healthcare services in different ways
- The use of healthcare services can be substantial at different stages of life: explanations for these differences include differences between men and women in healthcare seeking behaviour and biases in the provision of care to male and female patients
- There is very little data available on healthcare utilisation for the EU Member States that is broken down by gender.

Steps for Policy Action

4) Health information must be consistent, simple and clear. Messages need to be developed and disseminated through multiple media channels and in forms appropriate to local culture, age and gender

- Recognise that media plays an important part in the processes of education, raising awareness, and suggesting solutions
- Develop gender competent health information that is disseminated through media that is appropriate for men and women
- Include sensitive and on-going education about body, health, rights, with information and methods that hasten empowerment of both boys and girls in school curriculums

Steps for Policy Action

5) Educate health care providers, experts in public health, and researchers to include gender-sensitive approaches

- Policy effectiveness relies on policy makers understanding the impact of gender differences on health outcomes and patterns of service use
- Data availability must be accompanied by appropriate training regarding the use of this knowledge
- Researchers must be trained in communicating the gender dimension in research to policymakers more effectively



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