



Engender Database extract

GEOGRAPHIC

Continent
Europe (EU)

Country
Sweden

BASIC DETAILS

Language
English

Sector:

Health

Title (EN):

Is it possible to identify patient's sex when reading blinded illness narratives?

An experimental study about gender bias

Abstract description (EN):

In many diseases men and women, for no apparent medical reason, are not offered the same investigations and treatment in health care. This may be due to staff's stereotypical preconceptions about men and women, i.e., gender bias. In the clinical situation it is difficult to know whether gender differences in management reflect physicians 'gender bias or male and female patients' different needs or different ways of expressing their needs.

To shed some light on these possibilities this study investigated to what extent it was possible to identify patients' sex when reading their blinded illness narratives, i.e., do male and female patients express themselves differently enough to be recognised as men and women without being categorised on beforehand? It was possible to detect gender differences in the blinded illness narratives. The students explanations for their choice of sex agreed with common gender stereotypes implying that such stereotypes correspond, at least on a group level, to differences in male and female patients' illness descriptions. However, it was also obvious that preconceptions about gender obstructed and biased the interpretations, a finding with implications for the understanding of gender bias in clinical practice.

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Keywords: gender bias, medical, stereotypes

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Data type: Scientific article
Title: International Journal for Equity in Health
Year: 2008
Editor:
Publisher:
Volume: 7
Edition:
ISBN/ISSN: 1475-9276
Page /Chapter: 21
City:
Issue: 1
URL:

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