



Gender Health Research Network – Policy document

1. Model

The Gender Health Research Network is a national forum to promote intersectoral and interdisciplinary research cooperation. It is based on a modern definition of Public Health, which is derived from a comprehensive definition of health, and is interested in research on women, men and gender as well as in Gender Mainstreaming.

Participants in the network follow various theoretical and methodological approaches in terms of the concept of gender, and want to discuss these and develop them further in the research network. The objective is to raise gender sensitivity in research and thus improve research quality, and to widen understanding of the connections between gender and health.

Health

“The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.” (WHO constitution, Basic documents. Forty-first edition. Geneva, WHO 1996).

Research on women, men and gender

Research into women, men and gender in Public Health is concerned with the specific needs, problems and resources of women and men with a view to reducing gender discrimination, and aims to improve health and healthcare provision for both sexes.

Gender Mainstreaming

“Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action: a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.” (The United Nations Economic and Social Council, Resolution. E/1997/L.30).

2. Purpose of the network

The Gender Health Research Network intends to establish an open alliance of researchers and teachers in the health sciences, concerned with researching issues of gender relationships and gender justice in public health according to mutually agreed topics. The network will therefore be interdisciplinary, composed of scientists who take a holistic perspective and are active in fields such as public health, medicine, ethnology, economics, sociology, psychology and other disciplines.

To strengthen relevance and applicability, actors of civil society and NGOs, various federal agencies and organisations such as the Swiss Health Observatory, Radix Foundation for Health Promotion and others should be included. The variety of the participants will reflect the multilayered nature of the topic and their presence will contribute to improving the balance of gender representation in different scientific and social areas.

3. Objectives

The Research Network, initiated by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health's Gender Health Agency, has several objectives. It will

- secure cooperation between gender health researchers in Switzerland and mutual exchange in the long term,
- strengthen the know-how, competencies, resources and existing shared working interests of the participants,
- promote the formation of structures in gender health research,
- plan and realise joint projects of basic and applied research,
- intensify the use of available health data in gender health research and the publication of evidence-based results,
- coordinate with thematically related programmes (Graduate Colloquia Gender Studies Schweiz, Gender Forum Schweiz etc.)
- establish an exchange with European and international networks in gender health research and contribute to international scientific discussion.

4. Topics

The network will be open to a broad spectrum of topics that relate to issues of women, men and gender in Public Health, either current or of future importance.

The following topics are being prepared or are under discussion in the network:

- Sexual and reproductive health
- Work, gender and health
- Social inequality, gender and health
- Gender, violence and health
- Gender, health and ageing
- Gender and addiction

Further topics such as transplantation medicine and gender health economics are in preparation.

The list of topics will be extended according to contemporary developments in the research fields participating in the network, and according to the demands of healthcare policy. Periodic reports on the existing position will lead to the necessary innovations.

An inventory of studies will also provide a comprehensive overview of the research activities, level of knowledge, density of competence and expertise in Switzerland.

5. Structure and steering

The Gender Health Research Network will be an open alliance of experts.

The Network Public Health based at the ISPM in Zurich (S. Nocera, M. Rentsch) was asked to do coordinate the establishment of the network prior to the founding meeting.

From 2004 the coordination will be carried out by the SFOPH's Gender Health Agency. E. Zemp (ISPM Basel) will chair the group.

6. Action plan

In the preparatory phase, now completed, activities were focused on constituting the Research Network, establishing how it worked, clarifying participation in the making of an application for a National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) Gender to the SNF (an alternative to positioning it as an NRP), and determining the future form of the organisation.

The following objectives are planned for 2004:

- Participation in research for and coordination of a grant application within the framework of the NCCR Gender (spring 2004)
- Preparation of content and editorial work (possibly including drawing up some chapters) as part of the SFOPH's gender health monitoring (from June 2004, publication in 2005)
- Participation in the 2004 research agenda of the SFOPH's Gender Health Agency
- Organisation and implementation of the second national meeting of the Gender Health Research Network
- Drawing up a strategy paper on structure-forming measures within the framework of gender health research in Switzerland
- Preparation of the Research Network's 2004–2007 Action Plan (October 2004).

Appendix: Founding members

List of members of the preparatory group

Bergman Max	SIDOS
Budowski Monica	Swiss Household Panel, Neuchâtel
Burton-Jeangros Claudine	Department of Sociology, University of Geneva
Coda Paola	ISPM Basel
Duetz Schmucki Margreet	ISPM Bern
Gognalons-Nicolet Maryvonne	Institution universitaire de psychiatrie IUPG, Geneva
Güttinger Franziska	Addiction Research Institute, Zurich
Jeanrenaud Claude	IRER, UER d'économie politique, University of Neuchâtel
Meier Claudia	Gender Health Agency, SFOPH
Meyer Katharina	Swiss Health Observatory, Neuchâtel
Molo Cristina	Centro documentazione e ricerca OSC
Nideröst Sibylle	FHA, Soziale Arbeit, Brugg
Obrist von Eeuwijk Brigit	Swiss Tropical Institute, Ethnologisches Seminar, University of Basel
Perren Sonja	Psychologisches Institut, University of Zurich
Schmid Mast Marianne	Sozialpsychologie II, University of Zurich
Setz René	Radix Foundation for Health Promotion, Bern
Sottas Beat	Division of Health Policy, Research and Education
Spencer Brenda	IUMSP Lausanne
Testa-Mader Anita	Centro documentazione e ricerca OSC
Tschannen Pia	Gender Health Agency, SFOPH
Vuille Marilène	ISCM-SSP, University of Lausanne
Zemp Stutz Elisabeth	ISPM Basel