

Swiss Gender Health Report (Rapport d'approfondissement Genre et Santé)

Summary

The focus report Gender and Health presents a deepened gender analysis for the three thematic areas: Suicide and Violence; Mental Health and Healthy Aging /Nursing Care Needs. It should be useful for promoting equality between the sexes and quality improvements in the health care system, as well as offering a basis for a goal-, effect-, and solution-oriented strategy in the area of gender health.

The report is based on the WHO model of equal opportunity, which defines social determinants as «entry points for health investments». Gender is thereby not understood as an isolated, fixed characteristic, but as the result of a plurality of individual and structural processes. The gender analysis consists in surveying health changes in the last 10 years and focussing on those determinants for which gender differences are known or that have different meanings for men and women. Particular attention is paid to the interaction of gender with additional social determinants.

A first chapter hence also describes the time trends of social determinants in Switzerland under consideration of the gender and lifespan perspective. In the thematic area Suicide and Violence the development over time of suicides and suicidality are considered.

Suicide determinants and their meaning are represented by means of international literature for men and women across different age groups. The report explores the available information regarding gender- and age-specific experiences of violence and thematizes research needs concerning the experience of violence in the migrant population and amongst people with disability.

The gender analysis in the thematic area Mental Health concerns stress as well as causes and effects of stress in the adult population. It points to the interconnections of multiple roles and work-life-balance with stress and mental health. In addition, the relevance of gender to the perception of mental health and psychological problems, as well as the help-seeking behaviour of children/adolescents and adults, is examined.

The chapter on the thematic area Healthy Aging/Nursing Care Needs analyses the time trends of gender differences in life expectancy and mortality. It pursues the question, to what extent socio-demographic and socioeconomic factors, biographic transitions, health behaviour and socio-cultural factors – such as conceptions of masculinity and femininity – influence the health of older men and women.

Furthermore, it examines the need for nursing care as well as formal and informal care. The report makes recommendations regarding practice and research for all three thematic areas.

The recommendations lean in the direction of a stronger age- and gender specific differentiation of approaches in health literacy, health promotion, prevention and health care