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Health and gender studies: The advantages of an anthropological, feminist approach

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**Objectives:** The objective of this article is to show the advantages of an anthropological, feminist viewpoint in studying health/illness/health care processes, whether exclusively related to gender relations or not.

**Methodology:** Descriptive analytical.

**Results:** The article examines two main themes: the social naturalization of women and the distinction between sex and gender. By naturalization, the author means strictly essentialist and biologist perceptions of the body. This leads to theories about fundamental practices and roles in a differentiated, dichotomized psychology and biology that causes harm to particular groups (e.g. women, Blacks, homosexuals). Unfamiliarity with the feminist literature can lead to an ambiguous and often incorrect use of the concepts of “gender” and sex, constructed from a hierarchical, dichotomized, heterosexual view of the human body, a model that conditions the perception of health issues and realities. The author emphasizes the considerable potential of the concept of gender, understood as a principle of social organization that can lead us to much wider levels and dimensions of analysis than male-female health inequalities.

**Conclusions:** Anthropology of health that includes a feminist perspective must be introduced in order to enable analyses that go beyond the boundaries of man-woman differences. The author believes that gender should be considered “a total social fact” that is analyzed from a variety of dimensions, questions the principles of Western medicine, and links nature and society as does the anthropology of medicine, to help denaturalize gender studies.