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**How gender influences health inequalities**

While a range of socio-economic factors influence health and wellbeing, gender is of particular significance. “Men die quicker but women are sicker”. certain health issues are more commonly associated with one gender. For example, depression is more common in women, while lung cancer in men.

* **Society and gender:** Women are the main providers of informal care, The effects of this role: reduced sleep, less leisure time and increased risk of poverty. This leads to serious negative consequences, like: the higher rates of depression in women of childbearing age.

women consult doctors and attend hospital more often than men. In normal situations women at the same rate as men, and when men and women are exposed to the same stressful situations, they have broadly the same rates of depression.

* **Masculinity and femininity:** these concepts are social constructs; what it means to be a man or woman is culturally and historically specific. The emphasis on women as the main providers of care is a construction of femininity by society. Constructions of masculinity can have similarly negative consequences for men. Perhaps in an effort to “prove” themselves, young males have a tendency to be less risk averse than young women.

 Further, it is argued that women are more likely to express their feelings and seek support, while men are more likely to internalize anger, turning to substance and alcohol abuse for relief, potentially resulting in suicide. Ideas of masculinity and femininity influence choice of occupation, for example, manual occupations - some of which are potentially dangerous - are predominantly performed by men, which exposes them to higher levels of risk (males have higher rates of accidental and non-accidental injuries).

* **Social divisions and gender inequality:** Many women take career breaks to care for family members, while others work part-time to fulfil their caring responsibilities - as a result, women tend to have a lower socioeconomic status than men.
* **Theoretical explanations:** Marxism and feminism, **Feminism** is offering a variety of perspectives from which to understand women’s position in society. In general, feminists argue that society disadvantages women by constraining them and limiting their opportunities. **Marxism** like feminism, but all varieties of Marxism are critical of capitalism. The goal of capitalism is the increasing accumulation of profit, which Marxist theorists believe originates from the exploitation of the labor force - primarily by paying them less than the value of what they produce.