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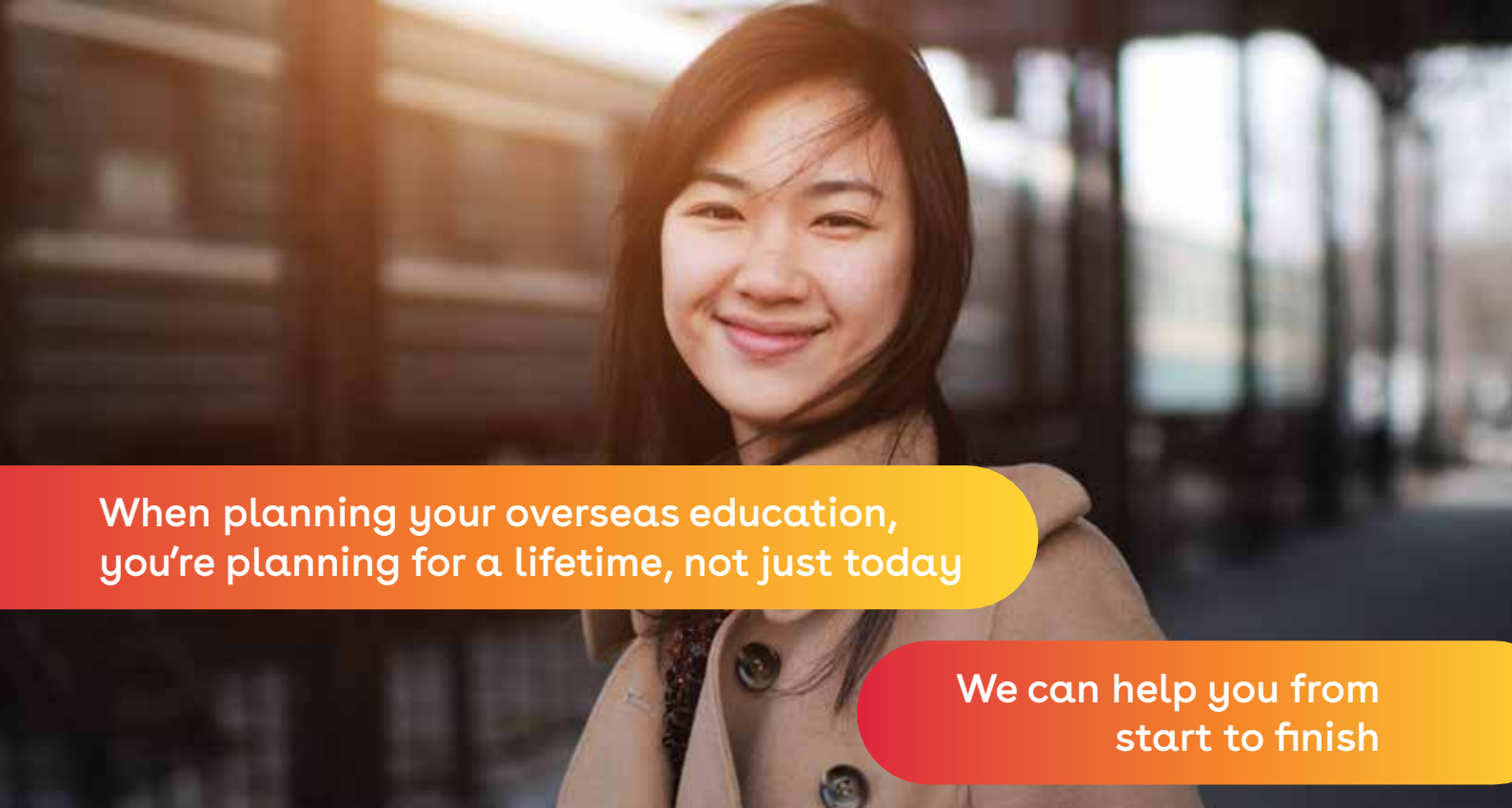
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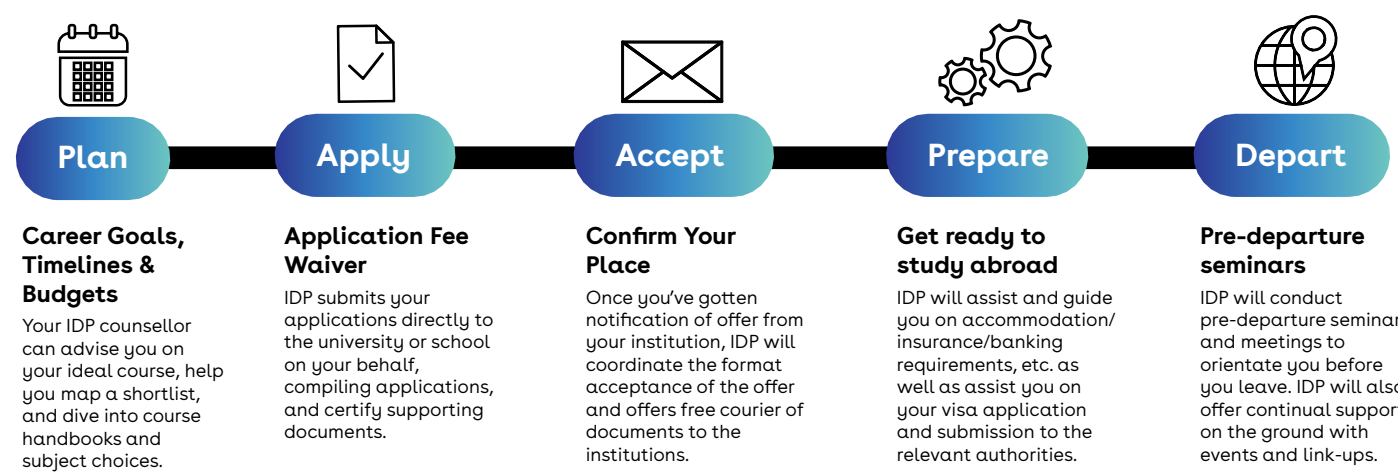




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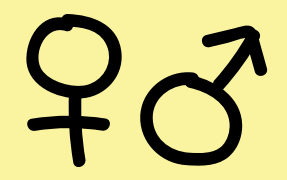
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BY LINDSAY WONG

GENDER-SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

You may have not noticed, but men and women use social media platforms in totally different ways, highlighting gender-specific behaviours. When scrolling through networks like Instagram and Facebook, men use different language and post content that is completely different from women. So how do we explain this gender-specific behaviour?

REASONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great way for people to stay connected – females use it more for this purpose while males tend to use it as a means to obtain information. Females generally use social media to maintain existing relationships while males usually use it to create new ones, according to a 2012 study. Social marketer Neil Patel found that:

 **69%** of women **54%** of men 
use Facebook to keep in touch with friends.


According to research from Facebook, females tend to share more personal topics, such as relationship and family issues. Males prefer to discuss more abstract and sometimes controversial issues like politics, but when females do so, they often receive more abusive and condescending comments when expressing their opinions online.

A Twitter experiment by British journalist Martin Belam – where he spoof-tweeted as male and female celebrities – showed that when he presented himself as a woman, the account received significantly more offensive and misogynist comments. News media The Guardian also found that 8 out of 10 abused journalists were female, based on their 70 million online comments.

As a result, females might feel hesitant to discuss important matters online, leading to gender-skewed discussions on issues like politics and even feminism.

REFLECTING TRADITIONAL GENDER STEREOTYPES

Females usually gravitate more towards visual platforms and pay attention to aesthetics, with curated profiles and feeds. According to Pew Research Center, Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram have a larger female user base, while men utilise text-oriented platforms like Reddit or Twitter more, which could explain how they're more vocal about their opinions, preferring to have lengthy discussions about all kinds of matters.

 **This preference for social media could explain why females tend to receive more likes and reactions on their posts, while males tend to receive more comments.**

A selfie-exploratory project found that the number of female selfies is always significantly higher, and that females prefer to post portraits compared to men who prefer body shots. An Indiana University study showed that teenage females like to post more seductive photos, while males prefer shots related to risky behaviours, alcohol, or sex.

While men and women produce almost equal amounts of creative work like art or music, almost two-thirds of men reported posting their work online while only half of women reported doing so, according to a study by Northwestern University.

DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE

Gender-specific language on social media is similar to conversational language face-to-face. Because of language behaviour, it's possible to identify the gender of someone online based on how they write.

Men tend to use more formal speech, offensive words, and possessive language (eg. using the pronoun 'my' when mentioning their wife or girlfriend) than women.

As males are more prone to sharing opinions online, they also use words with negative connotations or offensive words more often.

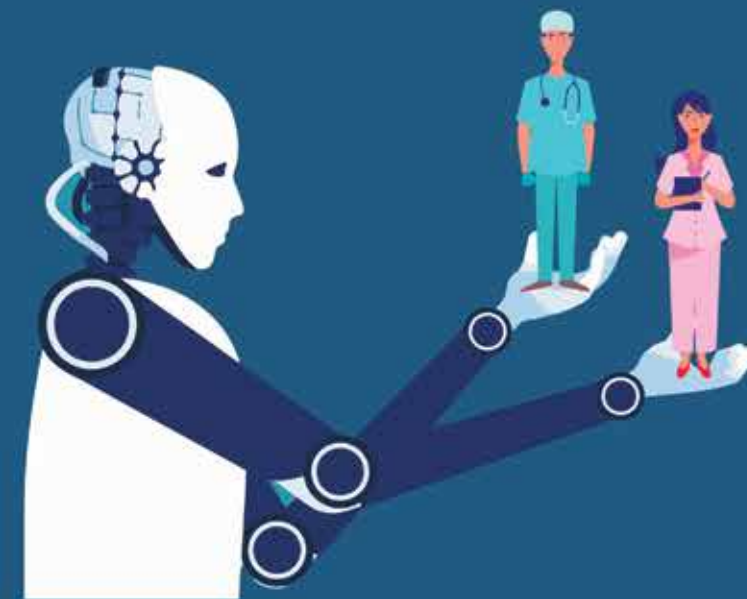
On the other hand, women are more sensitive about their language online and tend to use more emotional words like 'excited' and 'love'. They also use more positive language with personal pronouns (eg. you, me), emojis, non-standard spelling of words (eg. nooo waaaay), punctuation (eg. ellipses), and hesitant words (eg. hmmm) in conversations. A Twitter analysis from Johns Hopkins University found that:

 **women used the expressions 'OMG' and 'LOL', while 'yeah' is more associated with men.**

Online trolling is commonly done more by men than women: according to Psychology Professor Mark Griffiths, they do it as a way to vent their frustration and aggression on the internet because they may not be able to do it face-to-face like women.

 **Online trolling is commonly done more by men than women.**

The ways in which men and women behave on social media is reflective of gender roles in society. Women can't share opinions online without being attacked, while men commonly use authoritative language online to show who's in charge. It's interesting to see how social media etiquette can say a lot about society and how women are still judged, despite advancements in women's rights in recent decades.



By Nina Gan

MEN ARE TO DOCTORS AS WOMEN ARE TO _____

WHY A.I. IS SEXIST

As our lives are changing through digital transformation, our smartphones, smart homes, and smart cities now influence how we live. All of this is driven by technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) which is a main driver of automation of tasks ranging from medical diagnoses to judicial verdicts and recruitment decisions. While they save us time and human error, relying on AI can be risky because of its inherent sexism.

HOW DOES AI BECOME SEXIST?

Artificial Intelligence is a product of machine learning – a function of monkey see, monkey do. One of the ways A.I. learns is through Natural Language Processing (NLP) which combs through linguistic data to interpret outcomes using mathematical models.

The problems come when an NLP's algorithm gives us gender-biased outcomes simply because of the language it's learning from; yes, the English language is inherently sexist.

Firstly, masculine nouns and pronouns often refer to both men and women (ie. man-kind, king-dom, etc), and it's only relatively recently that we used gender-neutral words, like firefighters instead of firemen. Secondly, ingrained sexism has trained our collective societies to hold onto outmoded gender roles. For example, we associate "doctor" with men, and "nurse" with women.

The K-nearest neighbours (KNN) algorithm illustrates just how sexist our language is: in the man subgroup you'll find adjectives like cocky, brilliant, or clever and jobs like banker, headmaster, physicist and thug. Women, instead, are described as sassy, sexy, and gorgeous with jobs like nurse, receptionist, pediatrician, and... prostitute.

This is because machine learning algorithms aren't sophisticated enough to pick up nuances. For instance, take the words king and queen: one is a royal male, and the other is a woman married to the king. As human beings, we also use queen to describe a woman leading a kingdom by

herself, but a machine can't wrap around the idea of a queen ruling a masculine king-dom.

Machines also have a habit of attaching gender to certain professions; the word programmer is gender neutral, but it tends to be associated with "male" because of the social perception humans have of the job.

IT'S NOT JUST ENGLISH

In Romance languages like French and Spanish, some words are tied to gender. For instance, in Spanish, a kitchen (cocina) is female, and money (dinero) is male. Therefore, it's impossible to ensure that certain data sets are unbiased prior to training. A classic example of masculine default due to biases can be seen in machine translation systems like Google Translate, for example:

Input: The women started the meeting. They worked efficiently.
Output: Les femmes ont commencé la réunion. Ils ont travaillé efficacement.

Despite the context clearly referring to women, "ils" – the masculine plural subject pronoun – is used to relate to 'efficiently'.

It's the same the other way around. In translating gender-neutral Hungarian sentences "Ő egy orvos. Ő egy nővér" to English, it assumes the subjects as "He's a doctor. She's a nurse".

These issues are common to most languages, highlighting how gender discrimination

spreads across the world – and therefore how machine learning based on human languages can easily be biased.

HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU?

As we move further into an automated world where we are increasingly reliant on incorruptible and dedicated workers, we're giving everyday tasks like recruiting candidates to AI that could be discriminatory because they copy human behaviours.

According to a Reuters report, Amazon spent years working on an AI system to review resumes and recommend the best candidates. Because the industry is male-dominated, the majority of the resumes were from men, so the A.I. discriminated against women (eg. down-scoring resumes that included the word "women"). Despite multiple attempts to correct the algorithm, Amazon scrapped the AI because it could not "unlearn" this bias.

Skewing the hiring process is just one aspect – bias in algorithms can also lead to discrimination in loan applications, medical diagnoses, and even the criminal justice system.

With gender inequality still deeply rooted in our society, machine learning algorithms run the risk of propagating and amplifying all our biases. This could have alarming consequences especially when we put our blind trust in AI in many different decision-making scenarios.

Are we living in a “girls cook, boys work” world?

By Yuki Koh

GENDER EXPECTATIONS

The concept of gender dictates how we live, whether we realise it or not. It's an identity we cannot escape; as sociologists Candace West and Don Zimmerman once said, we don't simply have a gender, we accomplish the act of doing gender everyday.

We hear gender expectations and stereotypes everyday – phrases like “real men don't cry”, “man up”, “sissy”, “tomboy”, and worse things have been used to describe

men and women. These terms are used to shame people into conforming into certain gender expectations, and for a long time now, it appears that these stereotypes have remained relatively stagnant. Despite being counted among the world's best nations for gender equality, certain gender expectations are still strong in Singapore.

Women are expected to lean towards colours like pink, wear make-up to look

more professional at work, be more prominent in parenting, and be the stay-home housewife or caregiver. Conversely, men are typically expected to be breadwinners, be stoic and unmovable people who don't cry, be good at math or science, enjoy sports and outdoor activities, and so on. The list of expectations is endless – but does it hold for every country?

INDIA

India is largely a conservative patriarchal society where the locus of power resides in men, while women are discriminated against at every level, especially in the office workplace or political participation, which are disproportionately dominated by men. Women are expected to take on the roles of caretaker, housewife, or just wife, and are often wedded through arranged marriages. As such, many are often deprived of a proper education unlike men, because they are expected to stay at home and only adhere to housekeeping duties.

Such inequality can get deadly. As women generally contribute less to society and the

economy, many are not valued as much as men, especially since India still practices the prevalent but illegal dowry system in which the bride's in-laws are paid in cash or kind upon marriage. In worst cases, this has led to the deep-rooted and heinous infanticide culture, where parents choose to kill baby girls. Sadly, the practice continues to be under-reported and ignored by many.

Although gender expectations and stereotypes can be inaccurate perceptions that generally mean no harm, India is a country that demonstrates how when taken to the extreme, these expectations can become fatal.



JAPAN

Japan is known for how advanced they are in terms of technology and their standard of living. By extension, one may expect a progressive and more inclusive society. Ironically, Japan struggles with severe gender inequality and is actually ranked 114th by the World Economic Forum in the Global Gender Gap Report.

In this passive patriarchy, women in the workforce often face a glass ceiling and struggle to get promoted. They are not expected to work as much as men. When it comes to political representation, women are generally less involved as well, with a ratio of 1:5 in the cabinet. This stems from the idea that once again, women are expected to be domestic caretakers and

dutiful mothers. Furthermore, while women are expected to be quiet, demure, and submissive, men are generally expected to be part of the “boy's club”.

Unfortunately, Japan faces its own set of gender-based problems: it frequently fails to take cases like groping, sexual harassment, and rape seriously. They are commonly overlooked or casually dismissed – many times because “boys” are expected to act like “boys”, and women are expected to be meek about such cases. This is a serious power imbalance that needs to be corrected; change can only happen when Japanese men learn to respect women and not follow in the footsteps of their seniors.



Moving forward

Constrained gender expectations don't just hurt women – they hurt men too. While gender stereotypes may be an inevitable part of human society, it is high time we put aside preconceived notions of people we meet or see. Thankfully, this era marks a time of increased civil rights movements and heightened attention to how we approach the topic of gender equality. Although we as a society are far from ideal standards, each step is a move in the right direction.

By Bhawna Sharma

THEM EVERYBODY'S SHOW HER IT'S A MAN'S WORLD

THE WORLD OF GENDERED ADVERTISING



Gendered ads: Past and Present

Gender advertising existed for as long as women were fixed into rigid societal roles. For beer giant Budweiser, a typical advertisement in the 1960s pandered to men, with women reduced to domesticated housewives nannying their husbands. Clothing brand Van Heusen went one step further, proudly running the slogan “show her it's a man's world” in a vintage ad in which a woman kneels to her husband while serving him breakfast.

Fast-forward to 2019, and while a lot has changed, a lot hasn't. For starters, even though ads are less overtly sexist, an overwhelming majority continue to cling to outdated gender roles. According to a 2017 report from the Cannes Lions Festival, women are 48% more likely than men to run the kitchen in ads while men are more likely to be shown in sporting events. The excessive sexualisation of women in ads has also risen, propagating the unhealthy stereotype of women as sexual objects for the male gaze. Automobile companies such as BMW, in particular, have repeatedly run ads comparing docile women, and the male sexual attraction, to cars.

BMW'S SEXIST ADVERTISEMENTS



This year, the Oscars witnessed a non-English film clinch Best Picture in a historic first, grabbing headlines all over the world. For all its star-studded cinematic celebration, however, the pinnacle of Hollywood still isn't ready to discuss the gruelling emotional recovery of women after pregnancy. The 2020 Oscars' decision to not run a postnatal advertisement from Frida Mom depicting the frank realities of motherhood symbolises the gendered world of advertising, in which women are constantly stereotyped or censored.

Apparently, a film showcasing explicit violence and gore is deemed worthy of winning Hollywood's most prestigious award, but a postpartum advertisement showing a woman trudging into the bathroom in the middle of the night is ‘too graphic’. How did we get here, and what's the future of gender advertising?

Why is advertising segregated?

Perhaps the most pressing reason, however, is the gaping female deficit in the creative industry – only after almost a decade of action by the 3% Movement, 29% of the world's creative directors are women.



In an industry dominated by men, it's no surprise that 91% of women consumers believe that advertising is out of touch with their reality (The Guardian, 2016). A lack of female perspectives in advertising teams also means that there are few checks on the gender appropriateness of advertisements; the vulgar sexual objectification of women becomes acceptable in a predominantly testosterone-charged work environment.

The changing tide

Among a sea of distasteful ads, however, some companies have recognised the importance of engaging their female audiences more meaningfully. Healthcare brand Dove, for example, has shattered traditional notions of beauty by empowering women of all ages, size, and race in their ads. Fifteen years later, Dove's ‘Real Beauty’ campaign remains the poster child for successful marketing.

Large corporations have also used their influence to positively advance women's issues, from Pantene's deconstruction of the double-standards women face at work, to Whispers' ‘Touch the Pickle’ ad campaign candidly attacking menstrual stigma in India, and NTUC Income's ‘Times Have Changed’ ad which highlights how often women are told to behave. In yet an even more unprecedented move, the UK's Advertising Standards Authority implemented a ban on advertisements



perpetuating harmful or offensive gender stereotypes, thus making it the first country to legally codify gender discrimination in the advertising industry.

It is high-time advertisers took conscious charge over the messages they transmit through their content, given that much of what viewers see shapes their perception of right and wrong. Let's hope that it means the end of ads like the super cringey GV Gold Class ‘The Whiney Girlfriend’ video, or the downright rude 2015 billboard ads by Car's Jr.

Having a woman behind the steering wheel of a BMW isn't enough, nor are unfiltered ads of postpartum depression (although it would definitely be a step in the right direction). What the world needs is an industry where the ‘gender’ in ‘gender advertising’ becomes irrelevant, a world where everyone is given equal opportunities to shine regardless of their personal attributes.

NTUC'S 'TIMES HAVE CHANGED' AD

BY LYDIA TAN

Battle of the Sexes

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN



They say "men are from Mars, women are from Venus" and sometimes, it does feel like the two sexes are from two species from different planets. We explore some differences between men and women that go beyond the obvious.



WOMEN IDENTIFY COLOUR ON A WIDER SPECTRUM

Women typically have a wider, more specific colour vocabulary than men. For example, women might refer to a shade of blue as "periwinkle" or "aquamarine" whereas men might just refer to it as "blue". Israel Abramov, a behavioural neuroscientist at CUNY's Brooklyn College, did a study that showed women were able to distinguish subtle colour gradations, which looked almost similar to men. That said, the same study revealed that men are better at noticing small changes in brightness, even at rapid changing speeds.



WOMEN HAVE MORE ACUTE SENSES

They say to always trust a woman's senses — and there's some truth to that. Women have a stronger sense of hearing, smell, and taste than men. They tend to hear higher frequencies above 2,000 Hz but as they age, they find it harder to hear low frequencies of 1,000-2,000 Hz than men. A woman's sense of smell and taste can also be heightened when her hormone levels are higher, which is why women are more sensitive to certain smells and tastes when they're on their period or are pregnant.



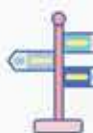
WOMEN ARE 'BIG PICTURE' THINKERS; MEN ARE DIRECT THINKERS

The brain is divided into 2 hemispheres — the right creative brain, and the left logic brain — which are connected by a bundle of nerves called the corpus callosum. A woman's corpus callosum is 25% larger than a man's, meaning they're able to bounce back and forth between feelings and facts easily, making them good at holistic big picture thinking and identifying new connections. Men prefer to think in straight lines, focusing on getting rid of extraneous data and pushing full steam ahead on a task.



MEN HOLD THEIR LIQUOR BETTER

When you go out partying with friends, you might find that your female friends are sometimes among the first few to get drunk. This is due to the fact that women produce less of the enzyme alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH), which breaks down alcohol in the body. Women also have naturally higher body fat levels and lower water levels, so alcohol is retained longer in their bodies.



MEN HAVE A BETTER SENSE OF DIRECTION THAN WOMEN

The stereotype that women are bad at directions might have some scientific explanation. In an experiment by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) where men and women were given navigational tasks, the men completed 50% more tasks than the women. Men tend to rely on cardinal directions more whereas women looked out for routes and landmarks to orientate themselves. In the same NTNU study, a group of women were divided into two and given either a drop of testosterone or a placebo. Even though the women did not complete more tasks, they had "improved knowledge" of the map layout and used the hippocampus in the brain more, which is more typically used by men when navigating.



MEN AND WOMEN HANDLE STRESS DIFFERENTLY

Both men and women deal with stress differently. According to psychologist Carl Pickhardt, women often talk out the emotional experience, whether it's to friends, family, or a support group; men often cope by seeking an escape activity, like solo activities or hanging out with other men instead of discussing their emotions. This is because when women are stressed, they release oxytocin, known as the 'love hormone' which is released when people bond socially. While men also secrete oxytocin, it's in much smaller amounts.

WEAPONISED FEMININITY

fighting in heels

By Nina Gan



representation in pop culture

The easiest way to illustrate weaponised femininity is to point to film tropes. Action heroines often use femininity to their advantage — they may possess powers or knowledge characterised by femininity or remain hyperfeminine while engaging in physical combat on par with men.



Mulan twisting the sword away with a fan

In Disney's *Mulan* animation, the protagonist is a girl who just couldn't conform to the traditional female role and because of this, the Matchmakers says that *she'll never bring honour to her family*. However, Mulan does more than bring honour — she basically saved China — and the way she did it is what's significant: when she's cornered on the roof by Shan-Yu, she uses her folding fan to twist his sword away from him. She combines her military training with a mastery of something feminine (the fan) to gain an edge over her opponent.

Perhaps the most glaring example of weaponised femininity can be seen in the popular 'magical girls' genre in Japanese animation featuring overtly feminine or cute young girls who use magic or magical powers to hold their own in battle. Sailor Moon is the epitome of the genre; while male superheroes like Kamen Rider transform into uniforms that make them look stronger, the *Sailor girls turn into exaggerated forms of femininity* — with their short skirts, long hair, manicured nails — that *seem ill equipped to do battle*. However, femininity and girliness are a requirement in order to succeed against adversity in the magical girl genre.



Hyperfeminine Sailor girls with short skirts

It's not just about appearances either — even the feminine image of being nurturing and loving are brought into the fray. In *Wonder Woman*, Diana embraces her belief in the power of love to defeat the villain Ares; *you'd be hard-pressed to find any male hero using 'love' as a power boost*. However, these are just a few examples of women using their prescribed traits in order to win battles.

If you're not sure what 'weaponised femininity' is, then phrases like *'eyeliner so sharp they could kill a man'* or *'lipstick as red as the blood of my enemies'* may give you a hint. It's the idea that conforming to patriarchal beauty standards (ie. high heels and lipstick) is 'radical' and that femininity is empowering (think Taylor Swift's *'Bad Blood'* music video, or *Claire running in heels from a T-Rex in Jurassic World*). It's the case where women use the tools of their societal-prescribed gender expression to win battles.

Liberal feminism dictates that women can choose to wear make-up or high heels, that her choice empowers her. But is it a good or bad thing? First of all, femininity is time-consuming and even crippling — like blistered feet and chronic pain from wearing heels — but women are expected to conform to some form of femininity if we want to get anywhere in the world. And women who don't are seen as lazy or unattractive; it's basically a lose-lose situation.

Where are powerful, non-feminine women like Jessica Jones, Brienne of Tarth, and Arya Stark?



is it a good or bad thing?

The discussion on weaponised femininity is divisive; some consider it as challenging male hierarchy and power, while others consider the *hypersexualisation of action heroines* as merely a vehicle for objectification. On the one hand, we see women kick butt and hold their own against powerful men, but on the other, these women need to look a certain way to do so. It seems to be the ultimate male fantasy.

It's as if women need to be 'feminine' — whether it's being nurturing or conforming to patriarchal beauty standards — in order to be powerful. Why can't women be strong without being feminine, like Jessica Jones, Arya Stark, Brienne of Tarth, or Princess Mononoke? It seems that 'weaponised femininity' gives men the reason to stick patriarchal rules on women (you can be strong, but also cute!), and sadly, gives women reason to police other women for not conforming.

In *Captain Marvel*, we're supposed to have a powerful superhero — but in the final fight sequence, *Carol Danvers only kicks butt when she's just 'being a girl'* (to Gwen Stefani's 'I'm Just a Girl' soundtrack). The message? 'Being a girl' is all a woman needs to save the day — it's almost like an ad for beauty products that 'empower women'.

Perhaps that's the reason weaponised femininity came into being: to ensure that women can be strong as long as they stay feminine, just so that society can sell her more beauty products to keep up with patriarchal standards.



Besides the physical differences, it's interesting to see how the differences between the sexes can be so ingrained into our DNA, and help us understand the behaviour in our fellow humans. However, we're all engineered differently, so not all men and women fit into these stereotypes — it's these differences that make us all unique in our own way. It's good to have different strengths and weaknesses on a team, in a partnership, and in a friendship.

BY ZHIQI WANG

Singapore Social

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN

With the new decade, it's no surprise that we live in a world that's changed since the time of our grandparents. Social expectations of different genders have been a long discussed issue, from the waves of female empowerment (e.g. feminism) to the redefined masculinity that has featured prominently in the press. But some things seem to cling onto the past, especially when it comes to social expectations of both men and women in modern Singapore society.

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF Men

DEFEND THE COUNTRY

The National Service is no doubt a rite of passage for all men in Singapore, temporarily putting aside education or career pursuits for national defence. Men are expected to serve the country without grumbles, even if it means a meagre allowance and lots of discomfort.

BE THE BREADWINNER

Growing up in an Asian household, it seems that expectations for men to gain early independence and financial security is higher than their counterparts. There is greater emphasis on the rhetoric to provide stable income for the family and provide all kinds of opportunities for them, even if it means sticking to a job that is not enjoyable (for example, working 100 hours a work week for some jobs).

EMOTIONALLY DETACHED

Boys are often told to 'man up' and be strong. Changes to overcome toxic masculinity are slow, especially in the acceptance of displaying emotions, like crying, or seeking for help. As such, levels of stress and incidents of stress are often higher, especially in this global metropolis where economic security is not guaranteed.

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF Women

MAKE SACRIFICES FOR THE FAMILY

Women, more so than men, are still very much expected to sacrifice their career trajectory in order to raise children (this is also partially the reason women aren't required to serve in National Service). They're also expected to take care of the household, regardless of whether they have a career, meaning they tend to do more work within their waking hours. Part of this remains institutionalised in our legal system that provides more maternity leave for working moms.

EMOTIONALLY AWARE

It is a well accepted fact that women tend to be able to relate to others better through emotional awareness, and are sometimes known for being too "emotional". This could be a function of girls being encouraged from young to be nurturing rather than independent. However, this does not mean women experience more emotions than men do – they simply are more emotionally expressive.

The traditional role of male-female household dynamics is changing, marked by a rise of female breadwinners across Western world. Even though women and men have equal access to higher education in Singapore, this change in household dynamics is still slow to come. Nevertheless, it's important to understand how each group makes sacrifices to keep our society cohesive and functional – a trait that most Singaporeans hold to great esteem.

BY DARRYL GOH

TO SERVE, OR NOT TO SERVE

SHOULD FEMALES SERVE NS?

WOMEN SHOULD SERVE

With falling birth rates resulting in an expected one-third drop in NS cohorts by 2030, it seems that female conscription might be just a matter of time. The military has been trying to use technology to cope with lower headcount, but there is only so much current technology can do. Women are more than capable of serving – they can bring different dimensions of thinking to the table.

I remember an impromptu speech made by a commander when I was serving. He supported the idea of women serving in non-military settings such as in medical or administrative fields.

His vision was to have every female ready to administer CPR or medical assistance whenever necessary, even after ORD. This way, he argued, would allow for more men to be drafted into combat roles.

On the social side of the issue, the big question is on equality. There were many opinion pieces published on mainstream media about feminism and NS. The general consensus was 'to conscript men alone is a sexist move, and to restrict women's roles to non-combat ones even more so'.

This local feminist stance was in stark contrast to foreign views online, which were mostly against conscription for both genders. While I support pacifism, I understand Singapore's military priority of deterrence.

While it's easy for one to say that she supports NS, sacrifice is a different ball game. The occasional slip-up of "I don't want to serve because it would disrupt my future" reflects a lack of appreciation for the other gender that's forced to sacrifice two years of his prime.

Perhaps the understanding of sacrifice can only be internalised when one goes through the experience herself. As much as we benefit from this country, we should contribute as equally as possible.

When I saw a recent news article about a female journalist's NS boot camp experience on Facebook, I knew the comments section was going to be a warzone. The article titled "Not easy at all" drew cynical comments of "what did you expect" and "try doing this for two years" seemed to imply that maybe women should be conscripted too.

NS was always promoted as an effective policy because of strength in numbers. We are able to boast that a large percentage of our male population are "always on standby" to defend Singapore when the need arises.

Having just completed two years of service a few months back, here is my take on compulsory NS for women.

WOMEN SHOULD NOT SERVE

A common rebuttal for the equality argument is pregnancy. Birthing the next generation of soldiers qualifies as National Service, as career sacrifices are often made. There is a glaring difference between NS and childbirth, however – NS is compulsory while pregnancies are not.

A stronger case against female conscription are economic consequences. A vacuum of fresh graduates and working folk would effectively make Singapore a less competitive place for young talent. Take into account 10 more years of reservist, which is already unpopular among employers, and this could cause a perfect storm to wreck Singapore's delicate economic ecosystem. By taking such risks on Singapore's only resource (human talent), some might argue against conscription of females.

REDESIGNING NS

One of the largest criticisms of NS is that it wastes time; get rid of the weirdly endearing yet unproductive culture of "wait to rush, rush to wait". No one should serve more than what he or she needs to.

One solution could be a massive overhaul of the system; get women onboard, reduce NS to a year, and allow for staggered age intakes. The idea of having a window to decide when to clear their service liability has its merits, and could be adopted in Singapore to reduce economic risks associated with conscripting both males and females.

Ultimately, there is no easy answer to this question – both sides raise valid concerns. With growing political instability in the region and a shrinking birth rate, time may well be running out for the Government to make a decision.



Depending on your frame of reference, the word ‘Witch’ conjures up either images of old hags with crooked noses and even crookeder agendas, or innocent women who were once burned at the stakes by malicious men of cloth. Either way, both of these references imply that Witches were women who possess a certain power, and feared for their magic and malice.

The idea that Witches wield supernatural powers comes from fiction – their stories concocted by fearful men during what was probably the ‘fake news’ era of the Middle Ages.

by Yin Loon

Abracadabra!

THE ICON OF THE WITCH FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Witches in the Middle Ages

The first people accused of being Witches in early modern Europe were older, independent women, often those over 50 years old and living alone or don’t conform to societal norms. They could be married more than once or never had children, and many were past their reproductive age, hence – in the eyes of men – dispensable, since the value of women often relied on their ability to reproduce.

According to historian Stephen Katz, they were considered “the female group most difficult to assimilate” into the male dominated social matrix. They were feared and reviled because they have taken the power of free will for themselves, and sometimes because they don’t conform to female beauty standards; some women were tortured simply for being unfortunate enough to be ‘crone-like’, snaggle-toothed or hairy lipped!

Massive-scale witch hunts took place between 1450–1750 when Christianity took hold over the Western world, since Christian doctrine recognises witchcraft as a form of Satanic influence. Witches were blamed for everything from the death of husbands, to

bad weather and other random misfortunes. Once they were tortured into confession, Witches were burned or hung as an attempt by society to police women and as convenient scapegoats when things go wrong.

Not all Witches were old – Joan of Arc was a woman who couldn’t be controlled, who defied explanation, who rebelled, and wouldn’t conform, so she was tried for witchcraft (and dressing like a man) and burned alive. This punishment was reserved for Witches – most other people were hung before being burned – because Christians believed a burned body couldn’t be resurrected, hinting at how fearful they were.

By the 1800s, witch-hunts tailed off, but the centuries-long smear campaign wasn’t enough to snuff out Witches as a threat and a symbol of empowerment.

Witches of fiction

Fairy tales like Sleeping Beauty and Snow White are classic face-offs between the young, obedient princess who’s desired by Prince Charming versus the unwanted older woman (the Witch) who’s jealous and vengeful enough to kill children or torture animals. Through these stories – written by men – we’re taught that young, innocent beauties should be revered while older, opinionated women who stand up for themselves are evil and therefore, Witches. We’re taught that men would save young, innocent beauties and slay the old Witches.

But pop culture juggled the caricature of the Witch on screen. Wizard of Oz (1939) and the TV series Bewitched (1960s) showed that not all Witches were evil old hags created by fairy tales. By the 90s, teen girls – with their coming-of-age struggles to conform to a

Modern persecution of witches

The stigma and fear of old women as Witches still prevails across the world today. Witch-hunts still happen when patriarchal communities sense challenges or want to place blame on someone for something they don’t understand.

A large proportion of older women across villages in Nigeria, Tanzania, and India are tortured or murdered because they were feared for using “black magic”, and blamed for misfortunes like failed harvests, infertility, or death. Sometimes, they’re simply accused of witchcraft because men want to confiscate their land or goods.

Much like in the Middle Ages, they were a convenient scapegoat because older women – way past their reproductive ages – were seen as dispensable in villages that have not experienced the benefits of modern education.

Witches as icons of change

Scholar Mary Beard argued that stories of Witches dating back to antiquity seek to reinforce the male right to defeat female (ab)users of power, suggesting that women are not entitled to power in the first place. She challenges the fragility of misogynist patriarchy and the traditional roles of womanhood, and therefore, the current power dynamics.

Perhaps a combination of fairy tales and a fear of change is why Western society hasn’t grown out of the habit of portraying powerful older women as evil Witches, especially in politics. In the USA, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senator Elizabeth Warren and Hilary Clinton are routinely taunted as Witches. In the UK, former prime minister Theresa May was nicknamed the Wicked Witch of Westminster, and Australia’s ex-prime minister Julia Gillard was viewed as a godless, childless, unmarried Witch.

These women are repositories of knowledge, relational skills, and experience – but they’re portrayed as Witches of evil simply because they’re women who challenged traditional male power and societal norms. Had they been men, they wouldn’t have been taunted or challenged – they would likely be elected into power. We all know that men with less qualifications have been.

In recent years, it seems as if the history of old witch-hunts and the 90s wave of teen Witches – where women gather together and hatch plots, obtaining unthinkable power – are turning the tables on the men in power. Across the USA, neo-pagan Witches are rising up against sexual predators – a manifestation of male dominance over women – like Brock Turner, the supreme court justice Brett Kavanaugh, and President Donald Trump himself. Arguably the epitome of old school patriarchy, Trump has consistently tweeted the term “WITCH HUNT” in caps whenever he felt persecuted.

Whether it’s from Hollywood iconography, religious doctrine or coming-of-age angst, the modern figure of Witches is one of resistance. Sure, Witches these days have been co-opted into tepid modern-day “spirituality” – think Wiccans and white magic – but we should not forget that while the Witch icon has evolved, it stays true to its roots: women who are nonconformist, knowledgeable, powerful, independent, and a force to be reckoned with. It’s high time Witches were celebrated, not persecuted.

THE LIST

EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN
WHO HAVE SHAPED SINGAPORE

SINGAPORE WOMEN'S EVEREST TEAM

(Jane Lee, Sim Yihui, Joanne Soo, Lee Peh Gee, Lee Li Hui, Esther Tan)

FIRST ALL-FEMALE TEAM TO SUMMIT EVEREST

Back in 2004, Jane and Yihui (both undergrads at NUS at the time) set out to form Singapore's first all-women mountaineering team. Out of 30 women who responded to the recruitment, six women - all with diverse backgrounds - made it through five years of intense training. Five of them made it to Everest's summit - while Yihui had to turn back because of persistent chest pains. Li Hui, Esther, and Jane reached the summit on 20 May, while Joanne and Peh Gee followed suit two days later. In May 2009, these women showed that the world's highest mountain was not an insurmountable challenge.

GAN SIOW HUANG

FIRST FEMALE BRIGADIER-GENERAL IN THE SAF

Coming from a humble background, she was the first woman Brigadier-General in the Singapore Armed Forces. After going through Basic Military Training and Officer Cadet School, she worked her way up the ranks from Air Traffic Controller to becoming the first female commander responsible for round-the-clock surveillance of Singapore's airspace for air defence. During her tenure with the SAF, she graduated with First Class Honours in Economics from the London School of Economics before obtaining her MBA from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2010.

HO CHING

HEAD OF ONE OF THE LARGEST SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUNDS IN THE WORLD

She is the CEO of Temasek Holdings, and over 17 years was credited with helping the government-owned investment firm's portfolio grow to over \$313 billion. In 2007, Time Magazine picked her as one of the "100 most influential men and women" in the world and Forbes listed her as the third most powerful woman in business outside the USA. She began her career with the Ministry of Defence before becoming the President and CEO of Singapore Technologies credited for listing the company as the largest defence engineering company in Asia in 1997. She was a President's Scholar with an MSc in Electrical Engineering from Stanford University.

Singapore's status as a rich, first-world nation would not be possible without the efforts of these notable women who have collectively contributed to our gender parity, security, and economic status. They are just a handful of the honorees of the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame.

DR. NOELEEN HEYZER

HIGHEST-RANKING SINGAPOREAN IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

She was an Under-Secretary-General of the UN and the highest ranking Singaporean in the UN system during her term. She was the first woman from outside North America to head the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the first woman to serve as the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Being at the forefront of many innovations, from regional disaster preparedness to energy security, she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 in recognition of her struggle to improve the lives of women.

MIRANDA YAP (1948-2015)

PIONEER OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES IN SINGAPORE

She played a pivotal role in the development of biomedical sciences in Singapore, having cultivated a highly-skilled R&D talent pool in a vibrant research environment. She was a founder of Bioprocessing Technology Institute (BTI) which provides core services for the biotechnology industry, and an executive director of the A*STAR Graduate Academy. She was passionate in nurturing scientific talent and was a popular lecturer at the Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Faculty at NUS, where she earned her degree in Applied Chemistry before obtaining a Master's degree from University College London and a PhD from the University of Toronto.

MAGGIE LIM (1915-1995)

PIONEER PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER IN SINGAPORE

As the first Singapore's first female Queen's Scholar after earning a record six distinctions in her Cambridge examinations at Raffles Girls' School, she qualified as a licensed medical doctor in London. Upon her return to Singapore, she became a pioneer public health officer and campaigned to raise awareness of birth control. She became the head of the Ministry of Health's Maternity and Child Welfare Department (MCWD) in 1963, responsible for recruiting doctors, recommending forms of contraception, and helping to manage clinics. After retiring from MCWD, she made a second career as a professor of epidemiology and public health at the University of Hawaii until her death.

Eat. Drink Man. Woman

BY YIN LOON

EATING ACCORDING TO YOUR GENDER

You are what you eat, as the saying goes. But what you eat also depends on whether you're a male or female because - surprise, surprise - our bodies are built differently, and therefore we need different nutrients. While it goes without saying that everybody should be eating healthy, eating these foods based on whether you're a guy or gal could get you extra benefits because of how differently our bodies are built.

FOODS THAT BENEFIT MEN

CHERRIES

Men tend to have higher uric acid levels than women, so they're more prone to suffering from gout. Cherries are great for reducing gout flare-ups, because the pigment in cherries contain anti-inflammatory chemicals called anthocyanins, and research has found that cherry juice treats gout flare-ups by reducing the level of uric acid in the body. One major study showed that the chance of a flare-up is reduced by half by eating 10 cherries a day.

OYSTERS

Men should have a healthy level of zinc for prostate health (about 11mg daily). Since being zinc-deficient increases the risk of developing prostate cancer as well as an inflamed or enlarged prostate, and even erectile dysfunction. Luckily zinc is found in shellfish like lobster and crab, but it is especially abundant in oysters, which packs in 5.3 mg per medium-sized bivalve in a healthy, low-calorie source.

BROCCOLI

Broccoli is found to be helpful in reducing the risk of bladder cancer (a cancer that affects two to three times as many men as women), especially for those who have five servings a week. Broccoli is loaded with vitamin C, beta-carotene, potassium, and a phytochemical called sulforaphane which also reduces the rate of prostate and colon cancer. Other cruciferous vegetables, like cauliflower or cabbage, also have similar qualities.

EGGS

Men who're interested in building muscle would benefit from eggs - they contain the most readily utilised protein, meaning that it's most efficient for muscular growth. One large egg packs 6g of protein, and 63mg of potassium into just 78 calories. The yolk contains B12 which is necessary for fat breakdown and muscle contraction, and lutein which is an antioxidant good for your vision. However, eating too many eggs - particularly the yolk - will raise your cholesterol level.

FOODS THAT BENEFIT WOMEN

CRANBERRY JUICE

About 60% of women will experience a urinary tract infection (UTI) at some point in their life (especially in their late teens to 20s), and it's a condition that afflicts more women than men. Scientists have reported that drinking cranberry juice - which is loaded with acid compounds that aren't destroyed by the digestive system - could help prevent bacteria like E. coli from developing into an infection in the urinary tract.

YOGURT

Yeast infections commonly affect up to 75% of women at some point in their lifetime. That's why it's important to balance pH levels with probiotic-rich foods like yogurt. More than just being good for the gut (and therefore immune system), the lactobacillus in yogurt prevents the production of candida (a type of fungus) and vaginitis in the vagina. Plus, the calcium in yoghurt has been shown to help in reducing PMS symptoms.

SOY

Women who consume enough soy foods early in life - during childhood or adolescence - may have a lower lifetime risk of developing breast cancer. The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends taking soy because it's associated with decreased risk for breast cancer recurrence and mortality. Phytoestrogens in soy also promote vaginal health and lubrication, especially in women with reduced estrogen levels caused by anything from medications to menopause.

SALMON

Women suffering from PMS might benefit from getting more vitamin D in their diet, especially if they have at least 100IU of it a day. One of the best food sources of vitamin D is wild salmon, which is also a good source of vitamin B6 (which helps reduce irritability) and omega-3 fatty acids - an anti-inflammatory nutrient that could reduce PMS-induced bloating, headaches, breast tenderness, depression, and lack of concentration. Other fish with similar benefits include mackerel and sardine.

While Singapore is generally a crime-free country, it has seen a rise in 'outrage of modesty' cases in recent years. 'Outrage of modesty' involves cases like molest as well as voyeurism in the form of taking unlawful videos of someone in the shower or upskirt photos. Look at the news today, and you'll find plenty of Peeping Tom and upskirt incidents – the one thing that ties them together is the fact that all the perpetrators are men.

But not all perverts are the usual suspects (ie. older 'uncle' types); for the past few years now, what caught the attention of the public was that many of the perpetrators were young, university-age students.

Secret videos

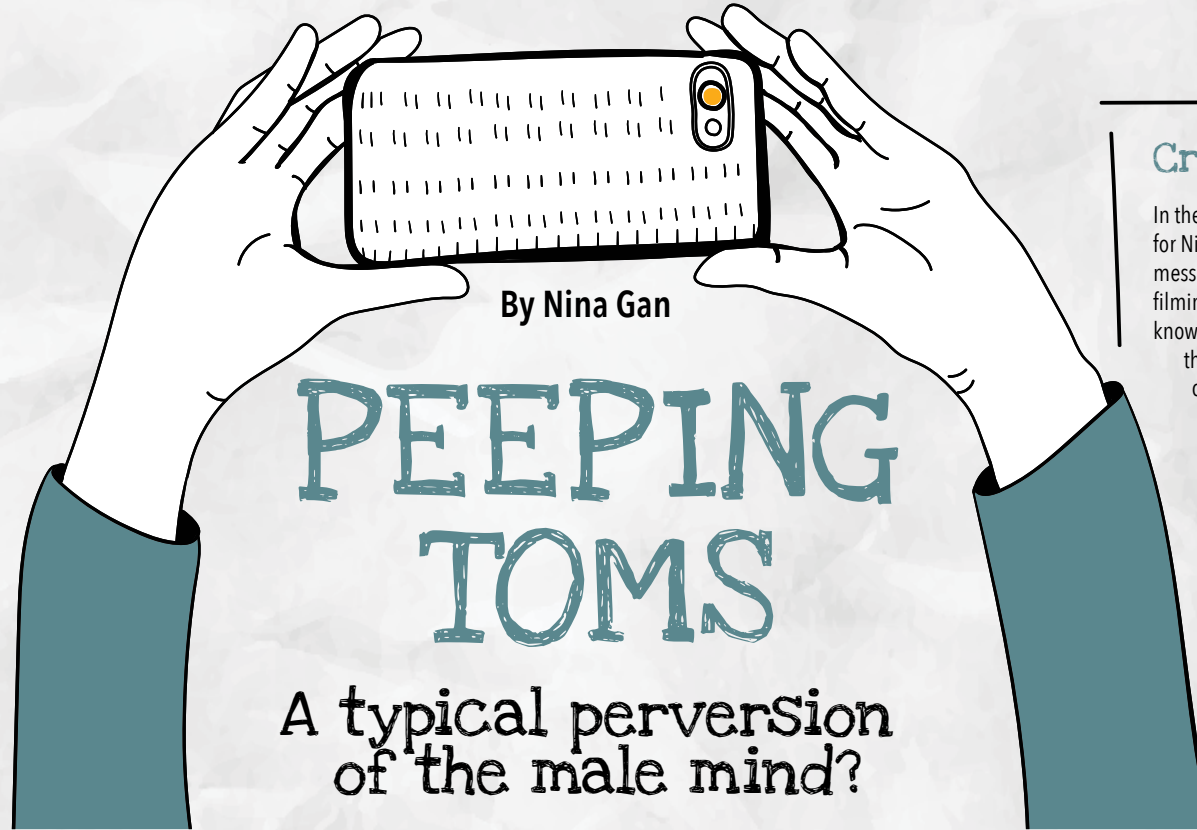
A majority of cases of 'outrage of modesty' committed by these young men don't involve physical contact. Their crimes mainly involved the filming of females in obscene videos – these include upskirt videos taken in public or videos of women showering filmed by hidden phone cameras.

In 2018, the first public exposure of a Peeping Tom was brought to light by NUS student Monica Baey after she realised she was being secretly filmed without her knowledge in her dorm shower by fellow student, Nicholas Lim. We all know how the saga went – the school only sentenced Nicholas to a suspension for a semester and he was made to write an apology letter to her. No police action was taken.

The following years have been rife with voyeurism cases involving mobile phones. In February, a Yale-NUS student was charged with 27 weeks in jail for filming shower videos of 4 female students – a punishment that was undoubtedly harsher than the slap on the wrist Nicholas Lim received.

Other student-offenders include NUS student Joel Rasis Ismail who was a 'budding architect', and 17-year-old NTU student, Han Shiyu, who was expelled from school for his misdeeds. Even a 22-year-old Singaporean man from a 'top university in Britain' who came back for his holidays couldn't resist recording unlawful videos of women showering.

Shower videos aren't the only crimes – upskirt videos seems to be a very popular perversion. Perpetrators include SIM student Tham Heng Yew who was arrested multiple times for filming upskirt photos using a camera phone hidden in his shoe, NUS student Luah Chao Zhi



who was jailed for 8 weeks for his crimes, and Republic Poly student Rayson Chee, who pled guilty to filming upskirt videos earlier this year.

Women haven't been the only victims, either. In 2017, 27-year-old Colin Teo was caught taking obscene videos of 33 men in public toilets without their knowledge. On the same weekend that Monica Baey's incident went viral, a 19-year-old guy was caught allegedly taking photographs of another man showering in a male toilet at NTU's dorms.

These cases are just the tip of the iceberg. Plenty more similar crimes go unpunished as perpetrators manage to evade capture.

Urge overkill

Part of the reason that we're seeing a lot of university men committing these acts has to do with a few factors. The first is that they're at their peak of sexual urge, because their testosterone – the hormone associated with sex drive – levels are at their highest in their late teens to 20s. Secondly, men generally get aroused more easily than women when viewing sexually-stimulating images, according to researchers at Emory University.

Most importantly, the reason there are so many university guys committing Peeping Tom crimes is because their dorms present them with relatively easy access to female toilets. It's a crime of opportunity.

The surge in upskirt videos points to two obvious reasons: the prevalence of such videos



in porn, and the fact that it's easy to take one wherever perpetrators are. In some parts of the world, upskirt videos aren't considered 'obscene' simply because it isn't full exposure since there's a thin fabric that protects modesty. But what's clear is this: fabric or not, it doesn't change the fact that perverts still react to them.

Voyeurs aren't a new phenomena – perverts have been perverts since forever (after all, the male brain area for sexual pursuit is 2.5 times larger than the one in the female brain). The only thing that's changed over the years is access to technology in the last 10 years when smartphones came into the picture. What was once a deed that was difficult to accomplish can now be easily done with a smartphone – this means men can film anytime they feel the urge. This also means that it's now easier than ever to give in to temptation, even for those who don't have strong urges to do so.

Crime and punishment

In the Monica Baey case, the light sentencing for Nicholas Lim's crimes sent the wrong message to would-be perpetrators. When filming someone in the shower without their knowledge was simply punishable by a slap on the wrist, it's no wonder men continued to commit these crimes. It sends the message that victims shouldn't feel insulted or threatened, and that they don't have the right to demand proper punishment.

After a lot of media attention, Peeping Toms caught in the act have since been taken to court and sentenced to some form of punishment.

On the flip side of the coin, punishments meted out for insult to modesty only apply if the victims are women.

This was put under the spotlight in the case of Colin Teo, who was only punished for the crime of taking obscene videos, not for 'outraging the modesty' of the men he filmed. This is reflective of how society regards the two sexes when it comes to the value of a man's modesty.

According to District Judge Kenneth Yap who presided over Colin's case, "The fact that male urinals and changing rooms are typically more 'open concept' than their female equivalents

Perversion disorder?

We don't really know why these male students decided to do what they did, seeing as they're in the prime of their life with no major stresses of the real world, like having to provide for the family. These young men seemed 'normal' – none seemed to have underlying psychological issues, or suffered from any abuse. Nicholas Lim even had a girlfriend.

When asked why they did what they did, their only explanations usually revolve around the "I couldn't help it" excuse, or the "I did it for stress relief." However, both of these excuses could stem from a voyeuristic disorder (read: mental health issue).

According to forensic psychologist Dr. Julia Lam, the lifetime prevalence of voyeuristic disorder is estimated to be 12% in males

(compared to 4% in females). She views extreme cases of voyeurism as a compulsion, obsession and/or an addiction. Voyeurs are more likely to masturbate or have sexual fantasies while watching someone rather than having sex with them.

Most of these criminal voyeurs who "can't help themselves" have a long history of engaging in excessive masturbation and pornography use. It seems their interest in peeping and upskirting stems from adolescence, and that their urges to upskirt for the purposes of masturbation is so overwhelming that they give in to temptation.

Clinical psychologist Joel Yang surmises that the habit often begins with a pornography addiction that becomes stale, and in order to obtain the same level of stimulation, some

would speak volumes of a differentiated approach to modesty."



progress to taking the videos themselves to add the thrill of "getting away with something". These could also be maladaptive ways of coping with stress or boredom.

"Stress relief" was also reported as a reason for voyeurism by one of Dr. Lam's patients – a male university student who was active in sports. To relieve stress from major sporting events or exams, he masturbated excessively as a 'coping strategy'. This led to upskirting, where he felt compelled to satiate his urges even though he didn't enjoy the act (apparently).

Where do we go from here?

While the number of cases of voyeurism in Singapore doesn't compare to South Korea, there's been a considerable number of Peeping Toms in recent years engaged in filming unlawful videos who were arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated.

Although victims of voyeurism aren't physically assaulted, it doesn't mean that emotional and psychological damage isn't there. While voyeurs have been around for ages, Peeping Toms these days have modern tools like smartphones that make it easier to commit their crimes. As such, they continue to accrue obscene videos for their own pleasure until they get caught (some voyeurs manage to amass thousands of these obscene videos prior to being arrested).

Is there any hope of redemption for these perverts? The good news is that psychiatrists have had success in treating voyeurs with a combination of medication and therapy. However, many offenders struggle with admitting they have a problem in the first place, according to Dr Cheow Enquan, a consultant at IMH. The reason is simple: admitting to voyeurism means admitting to a mental disorder, and in Singapore, it's widely considered a social stigma.

Until we all accept that mental illness – no matter what kind – is not something to be joked about, shoved under the carpet, or treated lightly, we won't be able to give these men the help they need, and vicariously, give women the peace of mind they deserve.



The ways in which transgender people are talked about in popular culture, academia, and science are constantly changing, particularly as individuals' awareness, knowledge, and openness about transgender people and their experiences grow. Gender is a spectrum, not a binary. Here's a quick guide to explaining the transgender terminology and the issues around it.



WHAT IS TRANSGENDER?

Transgender - or 'trans' - is a term for people whose gender identity or gender expression doesn't conform to the sex (male or female) they were born as. Gender identity is someone's internal

sense of being male, female, or something else, while gender expression refers to the way they express their gender via clothing, voice, body characteristics or behaviour. However, not everyone who has a gender-nonconforming appearance or behaviour will identify as a transgender.

CATEGORIES OF TRANSGENDER

- **TRANSSEXUAL:** This term refers to those whose gender identity is different from their assigned sex, and they often alter or wish to alter their bodies through hormones, surgery, or other means to reflect their gender identities. Those who've undergone reassignment are referred to as transsexuals - like 'transmen' (for female to male) and 'transwomen' (for male to female). However, they would prefer to be referred to as a man or woman rather than transgender.

Sex-reassignment surgery has been legal (and performed) in Singapore since the 70s, and post-operative transsexual people can change the legal gender on their identity cards but not their birth certificates.

- **CROSS-DRESSING:** Those who are comfortable with their assigned sex but want to appear as the opposite gender do so by cross-dressing, which is a form of gender expression that doesn't necessarily have to do with sexual orientation. A subcategory involves drag - 'drag queens' refer to men who dress as women for purposes of entertainment, while 'drag kings' refer to women who dress as men for the same purpose.

- **GENDERQUEER:** This refers to those who identify their gender as falling outside of 'male' and 'female'. They may be somewhere between male and female, or totally different: they may prefer to be referred to by gender-neutral pronouns like 'zie' instead of 'he' or 'she' and 'hir' instead of 'his' or 'her'. Some genderqueer people don't identify as transgender.

- **OTHERS:** There are many categories of transgender, including androgynous, multigendered, gender fluid, third gender, and two-spirit people. These terms often include a sense of blending or alternating genders.

Cheat Sheet

#65 Transgender



SEX VS GENDER

SEX is what you're assigned with at birth, so you're technically male or female. In really rare cases, some babies are intersex (or hermaphrodite) with an anatomy that doesn't fit definitions of male or female. They can appear male on the outside, but have mostly female-typical anatomy on the inside, or vice versa.

GENDER is more of a social construct - attributes like behaviour, clothing, and roles are given by society, so you'll be influenced by these aspects based on what your society says. So if you're a boy, you're typically influenced to pick GI Joe over Barbie, or prefer blue over pink.

GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Someone's gender identity doesn't necessarily relate to their sexual orientation, which refers to a person's physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person. Transgender people may be straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, or asexual: transmen and transwomen usually remain attached to loved ones after transition.



IS BEING TRANSGENDER A MENTAL DISORDER?

A mental disorder involves significant stress or disability, and many transgender people don't experience either of those, which implies that identifying as transgender doesn't constitute a mental disorder.

For these individuals, their significant problem is finding affordable resources - like counselling or social support - and lack of acceptance within society, which may lead to discrimination, ridicule or assault. Subtle forms of discrimination include glances of disapproval and uncomfortable questions about their body parts. These experiences are usually what lead many transgender people to suffer from anxiety, depression, or related disorders at higher rates than nontransgender folk.

BY LINDSAY WONG

Not Your Average Love Story

COUGARS AND SUGAR DADDIES

People often joke about wanting to find sugar daddies or mommies to help with financial needs, but this is a reality for millions of people around the world. However, relationships that revolve around a huge age gap can get complicated, especially if it turns into something long-term.

Sugar Daddy-Sugar Baby

A relationship between a sugar daddy and sugar baby is like a business transaction. Sugar daddies are usually successful, older men - in their 30s and above - who enjoy being an older support figure or role model to their sugar babies. Since they don't usually have the time to date, or travel frequently, they find sugar babies for companionship wherever they are.

Sugar babies are young women - usually college age - looking to make extra cash and reap benefits, like a monthly allowance, luxury goods, expensive meals, and even free tuition.

The Internet has provided an easy platform for sugar babies to find sugar daddies, with websites like Seeking Arrangement, Malaysia-based Sugarbook, and Universe Singapore attracting millions of users. The latter even encourages younger women to 'get rid of your cheap boyfriend'.

Although many may compare sugar babies to prostitutes or escorts - because it's a form of companionship-for-pay - they're usually involved in an arrangement that's mutually beneficial, with a certain level of commitment. Some of these relationships can last from a day to over a year.

The Complications of Love

Frequent interactions between a sugar baby and daddy could lead these performed intimacies to develop into real ones. After all, sugaring is literally dating.

Transferring into an official relationship phase can get complicated since the initial set-up is originally like a business transaction. Both parties would have to ditch their other partners, and a sugar baby would have to also shed her 'loving girlfriend' persona she puts on.

That doesn't mean that real relationships don't happen, though. A comparison would be like movie co-stars playing husband and wife, and end up marrying each other in real life after a period of intimacy on set.

Open communication is one of the key pillars of a cougar-cub relationship. Since no money transfers between the two parties, progressing onto a real relationship takes less of a sacrifice. While intimacy is a big factor, a deeper mental connection between

Cougar-Cub Relationships

Cougar-cub relationships involve an older woman and a younger man. There aren't many online options that connect cougars and cubs; some may find some luck on sugar daddy channels, but most cougars tend to go direct to the source, by going out to bars and clubs, or via special events.

Young men in a cougar-cub relationship are attracted to the idea of a more sophisticated, independent and confident woman, instead of girls their age who may be dramatic or have insecurities that need constant reassurance.

For them, being with older women means there won't be talks about cohabitation, the future, or children - reassuring for men uncomfortable with commitment.

Older women, on the other hand, like the vitality, openness, and enthusiasm that young men have.

Instead of money being the focus in these relationships, a cougar-cub relationship is more about building a sustainable physical, no-strings-attached relationship. Some cubs do have perks like expensive meals or presents, but it's not usually a business transaction.

cougar and cub could mean that some couples do end up in serious long-term relationships.

The silver lining in the case of sugar daddy-baby relationships is that the age difference would not raise eyebrows, since it's perfectly acceptable to have an older man in any society. It's different when it comes to a cougar-cub relationship; many men may have an issue with introducing an older girlfriend to their friends or family for fear of judgement. The families of younger men may not accept a relationship where the woman is unable to have babies.

No matter how some couples start their relationship, situations can change, and love can develop. The only difference that sugar daddy-baby and cougar-cub relationships have with a Tinder date is simply the large age gap. But any relationship built on mutual desire, trust, and affection is just like any other, and age ain't nothing but a number.



Zeus. Apollo. Hercules.

When we think of these Greek Gods, we all imagine statues of large, muscled ethereal beings who are the epitome of power, strength, and masculinity. But, the concept of gender in ancient mythology is not as binary as we might think. Throughout ancient Greek mythology, tales of gender fluidity and transvestism were simply part of everyday society.

by Nina Gan

Under the Toga

Dude looks like a lady

Across ancient Greek culture, having a man donning female dress is not unheard of.

Even Zeus – the king of gods, the ruler of Mt. Olympus – was not above cross-dressing to get what he wanted. For all accounts, he was a ‘man’s man’ who unfortunately had a habit of collecting lovers (to the chagrin of his wife, Hera). Being an all-powerful god, lovers fell at his feet – except when it came to a nymph called Callisto.

Callisto had taken a vow of chastity as she was a devotee of the powerful goddess Artemis (who happens to be Zeus’ daughter). In order to seduce Callisto, Zeus used his godly powers to take the form of Artemis and basically seduced/raped her in that form. Imagine Zeus being in a woman’s body (his own daughter’s), raping another woman. As odd as it sounds, Callisto eventually became pregnant, but that’s another story altogether.

The Trojan War hero Achilles also had experience with cross-dressing when he was a child. His mother disguised him as a girl and sent him to live among the maidens in order to keep him from going to war. From a cross-dressing child, Achilles eventually grew up as a

magnificent warrior, got married, and had a child. He later took part in the Trojan War where he died in battle because of his heel.

A similar upbringing was experienced by Dionysus – the god of wine and wild parties – who is sometimes depicted as an effeminate, long-haired youth. First assigned male, he then lived as a girl until reaching adulthood, when he embraced a bigender identity and went on to have orgies with both men and women.

Not all Gods dressed as women for their own gains. Demigod Hercules spent a year as a slave to Queen Omphale in order to atone for his own sins. As a slave, he was made to wear women’s clothes and sit at the spinning wheel, which was normally a woman’s place. He apparently wore the feminine look so well that he attracted the amorous attention of Pan, the half-man-half-goat god.

Norse Gods too

Even Norse Gods – like Thor, Loki, and Odin – have similar inclinations. Thunder god Thor once cross-dressed as a bride in a plot to steal back his stolen hammer back from a

giant named Thrym – with Loki dressed as his bridesmaid. On a separate occasion, shape-shifting Loki actually turned himself into a mare... and gave birth to an eight-legged horse.

Odin – the Norse counterpart to Zeus – was also a philanderer and shapeshifter like Zeus. However, Odin was considered effeminate because he was a master of *seid*, a Norse form of magic normally performed by women that allows them to walk “between” genders.



Love in the time of Gods

People often blame homosexuality as a modern-day transgression, but it was already pretty commonplace thousands of years ago in ancient Greece. It wasn't just the Spartan warriors who were intimately connected with their fellow men, even Greek Gods were known to dally in homosexual relationships.

There were plenty of same-sex couples in Greek mythology, mostly involving sugar daddy-type relationships. These were based on the custom of *paiderastia* (pederasty), a Greek practice where adult men maintain erotic relationships with adolescent boys. The younger mortal men – called *eromenoi* – usually end up dead.

Such was the case with a beautiful, young Spartan man called Hyacinthus who was famously known as the lover of the god Apollo. Hyacinthus was accidentally killed when he tried to catch Apollo's discus which struck him in the head instead. The distraught Apollo then turned his dead lover into a flower: the hyacinth.

However, Apollo wasn't Hyacinthus' first man – he was already in a sort-of relationship with a bard named Thamyris prior to Apollo showing up. Being a god, Apollo easily stole the young man's love and attention away from Thamyris. And while frolicking with Apollo, Hyacinthus caught the attention of another male – the god

Zephyros, who managed to have a fling with the boy. Hyacinthus was undoubtedly a man-magnet.

There have been many other same-sex relations between gods and mortals: Dionysus and Ampelos, Hermes and Krokus, Poseidon and Pelops, and many more. Even mighty Achilles was known to have a thing with his wartime companion, Patroclus.

The demigod Hercules, while proven virile with the women, had a long, long list of male lovers. Notable lovers include Abderos, who got eaten by horses he was supposed to look after for Hercules; Hylas, who was Hercules' companion when he sailed on the Argo; and Iolaus, who was with Hercules when he chopped off Hydra's many heads. The



Two-in-one

According to Greek mythology, before the world was created, there was an egg world. That egg would eventually be broken by Kronos (god of time) and Ananke (god of inevitability), and from that egg came Phanes. With two faces and two sexes, this primal god represented the ability to reproduce, and was the one to initiate life.

It probably comes as no surprise then, that even gender neutrality has a god. Hermaphroditus has long been a symbol of androgyny or effeminacy, and in Greco-Roman art was portrayed as a female figure with male genitals. According to stories, he was once a handsome youth who attracted the eye of a nymph who prayed to be united with him, and the gods answered her prayers by merging their two bodies into

one. Hermaphroditus was the son of the gods Hermes (the winged messenger) and Aphrodite (goddess of beauty), and his name is a mash-up of theirs. The word 'hermaphrodite' is named after him.

Not all intersex gods were worshipped. The Greek goddess Agdistis – an offspring of Zeus – has a body that appeared outwardly feminine, but possessed both male and female sexual organs. Her bi-sexed body was perceived as a threat to the gods who feared that her body made her so powerful that she'd take over the world, so Dionysus came up with a brutal method to castrate Agdistis.

relationship with Iolaus was actually enshrined in Thebes, where male couples of the day would exchange vows and pledges at his tomb.

Perhaps the most famous same-sex affair goes back to the philandering god Zeus, who was besotted with the “most beautiful of all mortals” – a Trojan prince named Ganymede (no, not ‘the-face-that-launched-a-thousand-ships’ Helen of Troy). He was so beautiful that Zeus turned himself into an eagle and kidnapped him, bringing him to Mt. Olympus to serve as cup-bearer (a sort of fancy teaboy) and, of course, as his lover.

Ganymede is described as being so attractive that he inspired amorous attraction from other males, and is often portrayed as the god of homosexual love. His name means ‘gladdening prince’ – or ‘gladdening genitals’, depending on context.

Zeus and Ganymede had a pretty long relationship despite Zeus' constant infidelity. Towards the end of the era of Gods, Zeus made Ganymede immortal by sending him to the stars as part of the Zodiac constellation where he shines as Aquarius (which means ‘cup-bearer’).

All is fair in love

Mortals throughout history have looked to the gods for guidance, reassurance, and acceptance regardless of their sexuality. Tales of Greek Gods are full of what would be considered aberrant behaviour when it comes to these salacious stories. But whether it's a divine cup-bearer or male lovers on Mt. Olympus, tolerance is often presented as a sign of civilisation's advancement – and a reading of Greek mythology reveals a greater acceptance of gender identity in ancient Athens than we often see today.



MEN ARE FROM MARS

HOW DISEASES AFFECT MEN AND WOMEN DIFFERENTLY

By Yin Loon

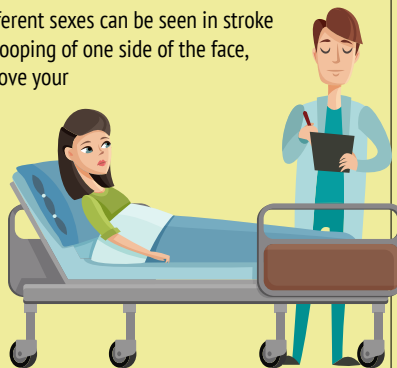
Putting aside obvious differences in diseases like prostate cancer (only affects men) and ovarian cancer (only affects women), medical data has historically been affected by gender-biases. This means that the rate of occurrence, mortality rate or symptoms are not the same in men as in women.

Nicole Bender's article on Vital Record explains how diseases affect men and women differently, with data from Dr. Farida Sohrabji of the Department of Neurosciences and Experimental Therapeutics at Texas A&M College of Medicine. She notes that the same disease may biologically present itself in men and women differently, and that sex (being male or female) affects diseases on a biological level, whereas gender (based on behavioral, social, and psychological factors) might impact the manner in which a person responds to such diseases.

IT'S JUST BIOLOGICAL

One example of different biological reactions in different sexes can be seen in stroke victims. Usually, the symptoms of a stroke are the drooping of one side of the face, slurred speech or the inability to raise your hand above your shoulder. However, women may report their stroke symptoms very differently – women often experience a headache or migraine, pain in the jaw or neck or feel confused and anxious.

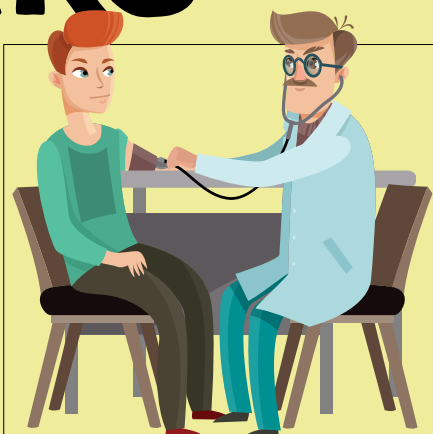
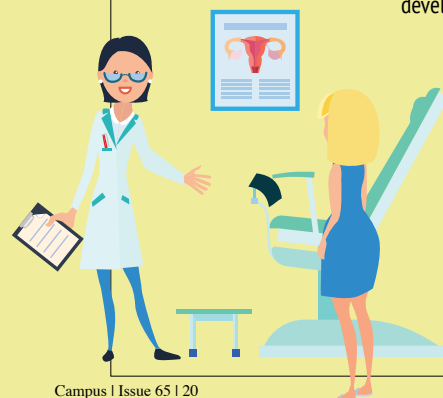
This could mean that women may be misdiagnosed or fail to recognise the occurrence – and seek immediate treatment – in the absence of wide-spread knowledge regarding these differences.



GOING HORMONAL

Men and women have different levels of hormones: men have more testosterone, women have more progesterone and estrogen.

Pre-menopausal women often have lower rates of infections because estrogen is an anti-inflammatory compound – however, it also means that women also tend to suffer from autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis or lupus at much higher levels. As women progress towards menopause, they will begin to develop diseases – like stroke – as the protective estrogen levels drop. Since women tend to outlive men, these diseases may affect more women than men as they grow older.



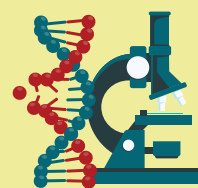
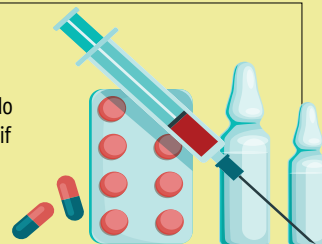
WHY GENDER MATTERS

While the physiology of men and women may present different symptoms to the same disease, gender differences also play a role. Cultural attitudes often drive how diseases are diagnosed and progress in men versus women.

For instance, men may not get tested for diseases like breast cancer because people think it only affects women. Men also don't get diagnosed or treated for pituitary adenomas (small tumors that form on the pituitary gland) until much later even though they tend to develop larger tumors; this is because it's also prevalent in women with irregular menstruation or inability to conceive, and they're more likely to see a doctor in the earlier stages.

DIFFERENCE IN DOSAGE

The difference in sex also present in medication, since they metabolise in men differently than they do in women. This could result in negative side effects if improperly prescribed. For instance, 100mg of medication works for a 200lb man, but it cannot simply be dialed down for a 150lb female.



THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

While it's glaringly obvious that both men and women behave and react differently to the same diseases, many basic medical studies still tend to be conducted on males only because of cost and convenience, since they don't have to account for variables resulting from women's estrous cycle. Luckily, clinical trials – ones that result in producing drugs for the general public – require both male and female participation.

Even though diseases are often generalised, healthcare is becoming more specialised and individualised. We can all make better health decisions by taking into account not only someone's genetic makeup and age, but also their sex and gender.

STRESS RELIEF

Artist Gemma Correll brings us this Stress Relief by reminding us of what we should do to protect ourselves (and others) from the coronavirus. Check out other downloadable colouring projects here: <https://shop.badgebomb.com/collections/coloring>

Colour these stickers in!

CORONAVIRUS REWARD STICKERS



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