

GENDER IN MEDICAL EDUCATION: The Nijmegen pilot-project

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In 1998, gaps regarding gender issues in the fields of biological, psychological and social factors were found to exist in the basic medical curriculum of the Nijmegen University Medical Centre. After screening education material for language, content and context, we recommended adjustments for the incorporation of gender issues. In this study, adjustments were evaluated. Our aim was to investigate whether gender had been successfully incorporated into the curriculum and what factors had played a role. Education material was re-evaluated and interviews were held with the block coordinators of nine curricular blocks. Our results show that gender had increasingly been brought to the attention of the students since the beginning of the project. Various factors played a role: concrete and directly executable content-oriented recommendations, adequate translation of gender differences into actual patient care, motivated block coordinators, presence of a trigger-person in the faculty, incorporation into the existing education programme, involvement of block coordinators in decision-making and the provision of practical and political support. Integration of the factor gender into the basic medical curriculum has been largely successful. Block coordinators' personal recognition of the importance of gender in patient care greatly facilitated implementation. The evaluation stimulated the formation of new ideas and agreements. We recommend that conditional factors are taken into consideration in the integration of the factor gender into other faculties.