

GENDER in MEDICAL EDUCATION: The Dutch national project

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Despite the growing body of gender differences in health and illness, medical schools have been slow to integrate gender issues in their curricula. A project started in April 2002 to establish gender-specific curricula in at least six out of eight medical schools in the Netherlands. In a pilotstudy, we had identified necessary conditions for the implementation of gender, most importantly offering concrete recommendations to course organisers. In the national project, by screening studyguides we identified gaps in gender-specific medical education as well as courses in which specific gender issues could be integrated. Results of the screening were discussed with all medical school directors. Furthermore, we developed a knowledge center for gender-specific medical education (www.vrouwenstudiesgeneeskunde.nl) from which teachers could download study assignments, test questions, or order education videos. With commitment of all deans and faculty leadership we continued with the screening of education material. In meetings with course organisers we discussed concrete recommendations for improvement. Notes were taken at all meetings and presented for accordance afterwards. By interviewing the faculty leadership and key-figures within the faculties, we evaluated the project. Gender has increasingly been brought under the attention of medical students in six medical schools and this is still an ongoing process. Examples are the subsequent integration of ethnic differences or the development of electives. A seventh school has started to incorporate gender after the project had ended.