

# How men's and women's health affects each other and Society

Dr Selwyn Hodge

Chair

Royal Society for Public Health, UK

# Inter-gender health determinants responding directly to medical interventions

- STIs;
- Unplanned pregnancy ;
- Allergies.

# Inter-gender health determinants beyond the direct influence of medical interventions

**Negativity to women and men who don't conform with:**

- Family traditions and norms
- Social group rules – particularly age related
- Societal norms and expectations
- Culturally derived attitudes
- Religious creeds
- Fashionable trends

**Including: those who differ in:**

- Sexual orientation
- Marriage customs
- Expected gender roles

# Inter-gender health determinants beyond the direct influence of medical interventions

## Social status

- ▶ Lack of capability to influence one's own lifestyle
- ▶ Exclusion from main stream lifestyles
- ▶ Perceived negative self-image
- ▶ Exclusion from political decision making

# Inter-gender health determinants beyond the direct influence of medical interventions

## Occupation

- ▶ Inappropriate or forced work
- ▶ Lack of promotion and advancement prospects,
- ▶ The glass ceiling for women
- ▶ Sexual harassment
- ▶ Poor working hours

# Inter-gender health determinants beyond the direct influence of medical interventions

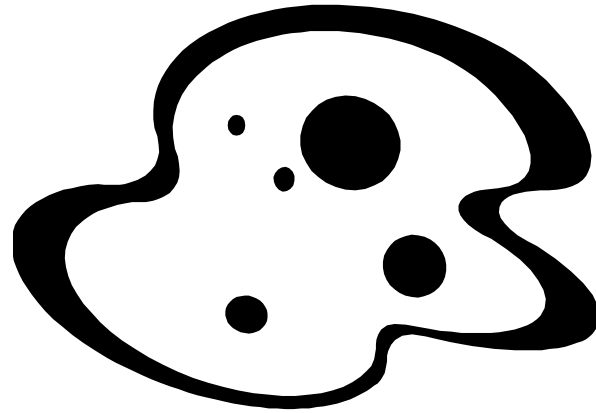
## Cultural Issues

- ▶ Attitudes towards the roles and status of women (mainly men's)
- ▶ Sexual exploitation and abuse
- ▶ Domestic violence
- ▶ Female Genital mutilation
- ▶ Religious rites and taboos

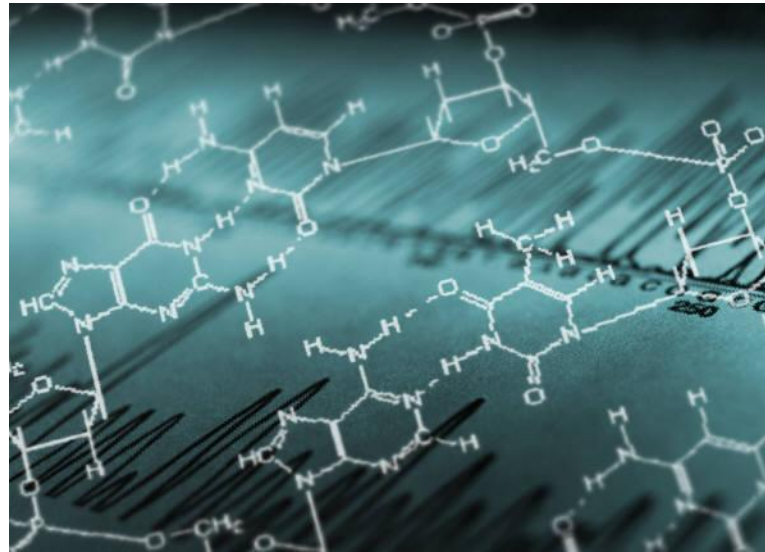
## Happiness and well being

- ▶ Family life
- ▶ Marriage

# The development of human health



# The development of human health





# Gender roles

## Female:

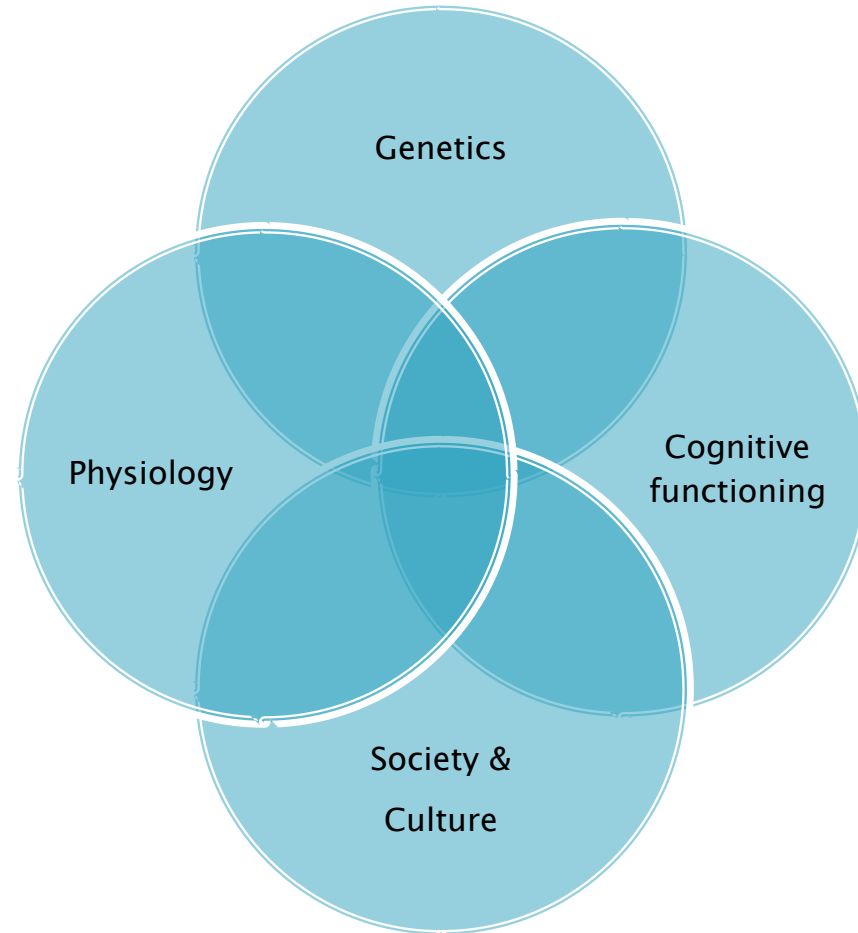
- ova carrier,
- nurturing the embryo,
- giving birth,
- lactation and breast feeding,
- home maker,
- principal carer for the child,
- main educator for the child,
- role model for female offspring

# Gender roles

## Male:

- sperm donor,
- protector of the family group,
- food provider,
- role model for male offspring.

# Human health determinants



# Developed Human Characteristics

## Female:

- multitasking,
- patience/persistence,
- small close friendship patterns,
- considered risk takers,
- long term strategic planning,
- interested in health promotion,
- interest in personal appearance

# Developed Human Characteristics

## Male:

- focussed activities with short attention spans,
- aggressive episodes,
- status conscious (land ownership and possessions),
- rash decision makers,
- large contact groups,
- physical prowess and display.

# Human Gender Roles

## Women:

- to bear and nurture children;
- to be attractive to mates;
- to work co-operatively with other women;
- to generate stability and sustenance for the family group.

# Human Gender Roles

## Men:

- to father children successfully;
- to provide food and shelter for the family group;
- to compete with and overcome other males;
- to seek distractions during periods of inactivity.

# Human Social Roles

## The role of men

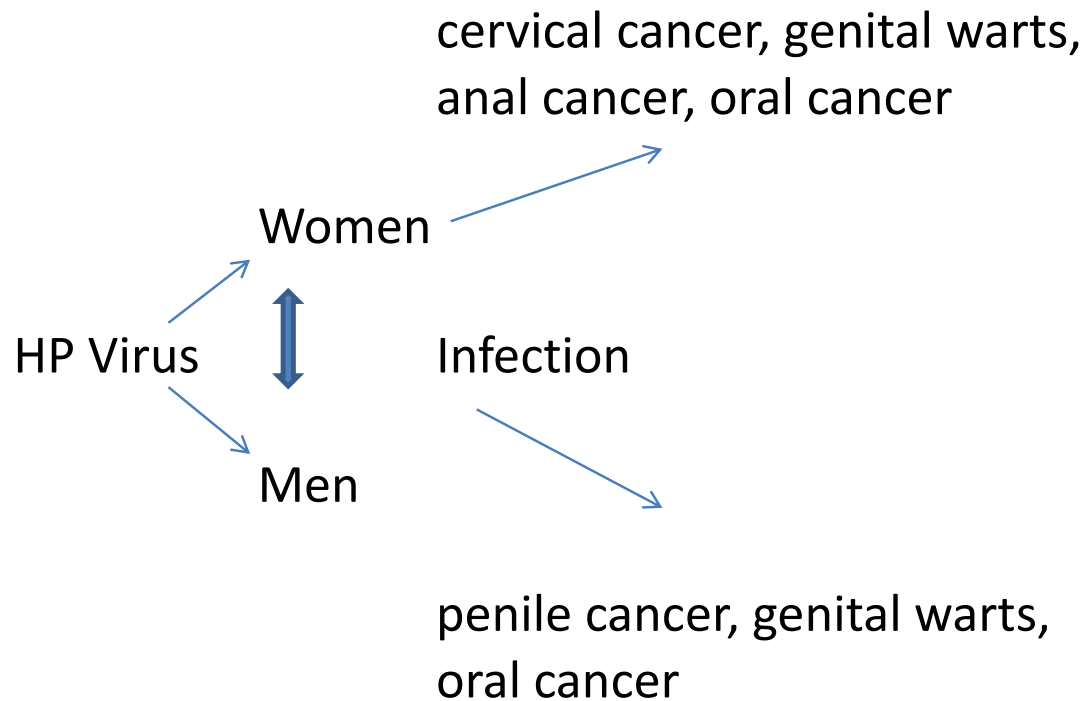
- the economic power house of the society and of the home;

## The role of women

- child rearing, home making and community building.



# Human Papilloma Virus



## Reducing inequalities and getting better take up and continuity in the HPV programme in the future - An Action Plan

- ▶ Extend HPV vaccine to boys.
- ▶ Ensure proper national and local strategies are in place.
- ▶ Link local health promotion and school health education programmes more effectively.
- ▶ Use a wider range of professionals to promote and deliver the programme – including pharmacists and health trainers.
- ▶ Incorporate more of the programme into school lessons.
- ▶ Recognise the need to get girls and boys fully on board before the vaccination programme begins and allow them to influence their parents.
- ▶ Encourage family health literacy approaches in schools using teachers as well as health professionals as mentors.
- ▶ Develop peer education programmes.

# The Way Forward

- ▶ Increasing the research commitment.
- ▶ Advocating change where necessary with decision makers.
- ▶ Providing effective health education and health programmes in schools and the work place.
- ▶ Increasing health literacy levels.
- ▶ Promoting a life course approach to health, culture and personal responsibility.
- ▶ Pursuing and supporting appropriate behaviour change.