

# Taking sex and gender into account in emerging infectious disease programmes: An analytical framework



World Health  
Organization

Western Pacific Region





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document demonstrates the important roles sex and gender play in understanding and controlling the transmission of infectious diseases and reducing the threat of emerging diseases.

It presents an analytical framework for understanding how sex and gender affect and interact with emerging infectious diseases. It is intended to be used as a practical tool to incorporate a gender perspective into emerging disease programmes.

The framework developed in this document outlines the pathways by which a person's sex and gender affect incidence, duration, severity, and mortality from emerging infectious diseases, both directly through effects on vulnerability of men and women to infectious diseases, exposures to infectious pathogens, and responses to illness, as well as indirectly through effects on disease prevention and control programmes.

Sex and gender differences include biological differences between males and females, biological changes during pregnancy, gender norms and behaviours, the male-female division of labour, and gender-related differences in access to and control over resources. Sex and gender differences can disadvantage males or females depending on the pathogen.

A life-cycle approach is used because biological and gender differences between males and females change over the life-cycle and have important implications for emerging infectious disease.

A gender analysis matrix and an accompanying set of model questions are presented as practical tools for carrying out systematic gender analysis. Numerous examples of how sex and gender impact emerging diseases are provided.

In-depth analyses and discussions of sex and gender issues are presented for three priority

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