

Proposal title: Innovating Medicine with Gender Perspective: Union, Leadership, Sustainability and Enlightenment

Acronym: IMPULSE

Coordinator: Lucía Gallego

Dptment. Immunology, Microbiology & Parasitology

Faculty of Medicine & Nursing

University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU

1) Flagship domains the application relates to

Health and Well-being

Equity

2) Main focus of the proposal

Gender mainstreaming in teaching is one of the central elements of gender equality policies at university level. As underlined by the European Union, gender equality is not only a matter of social justice, but also affects the performance of teaching and research.

Gender-sensitive teaching involves considering sex and gender as analytical and explanatory varieties, and paying attention to the similarities and differences in interests, expectations, attitudes and behaviours of women and men. In order to do so, it is crucial to take into account biological, social and cultural characteristics and to start from an intersectional point of view.

The objective of this project is to address gender perspective in health through the proposal to prepare an online course titled “Gender, Science & Health” that aims to work on the impact of gender on health in education, research and in clinical practice. Specifically, Cross-cutting competence will be to develop the ability to identify and evaluate health inequalities based on sex and gender in order to design solutions.

This proposal is framed within the strategic axes of the European Union in: a) promotion a multilingual, sustainable and high quality undergraduate and postgraduate offer; b) supporting researchers in training and promoting the adaptation to a new model of projects including a culture of diversity and equality and; c) turning the university into an institution that promotes sustainable development, inclusion and social commitment.

Involved ENLIGHT partners: University of the Basque Country and Uppsala University. We intend to involve the University of Groningen and WOMHER (Women’s Mental Health) a research center for Women’s and Children’s Health from Uppsala University.

3) General description of the initiative and the role of the applicants in this initiative.

In recent decades, WHO has shown the need to contribute to improved health, through tailored health research, policies and programmes that pay attention to gender issues and promote equity and equality between women and men. Following the WHO strategy in this way, will facilitate addressing global health challenges.

The gender perspective in the area of health sciences involves making visible and correcting scientifically identified gender biases in relation to the differences between individuals in the response to risk factors in the appearance of diseases, in the manifestation and experience of the disease, the differences in health care resulting in the results of treatments and interventions, as well as clinical management and the functioning of health services.

Gender mainstreaming in teaching is one of the central elements of gender equality policies at university level. As underlined by the European Union, gender equality is not only a matter of social justice, but also affects the performance of teaching and research itself. This has led to the development of a normative framework at international, national and university level.

Gender-sensitive teaching involves considering sex and gender as analytical and explanatory varieties, and paying attention to the similarities and differences in interests, expectations, attitudes and behaviours of human beings. In order to do so, it is crucial to take into account biological, social and cultural characteristics and to start from an intersectional point of view.

The benefits of gender-sensitive teaching in medicine are: a) To improve the quality of teaching and the social relevance of knowledge, technologies and innovations; b) To understand the needs, behaviours and attitudes of the population as a whole; c) To stimulate students' critical thinking; d) To develop competences that enable them to avoid gender blindness in their professional practice; e) To identify gender imbalances in their professional practice; e) To identify imbalances in the learning environment and to improve teaching and assessment methodologies; f) To develop the capacity of students to develop their skills and competences in order to improve their professional practice; g) To have a positive impact on the teacher-student learning environment. ; and i) To contribute to reflect on the professional environment and the organisational culture of the discipline itself.

In order to integrate these principles into teaching, it is essential to identify sensitive subjects and to do so in a cross-cutting manner. This proposal proposes to start with an online course but pretends to continue in the future with the adaptation of different subjects in the degrees of Medicine and Pharmacy, and can later be extended to more. The project will mainly develop the following transversal competences: Ethics and Professional Responsibility, Social Commitment, Information Management and Digital Citizenship, and Critical Thinking. It will also provide students with the basis so that they can later develop projects (such as End of Degreee, Master and PhD Thesis with a gender perspective. Specifically, this new approach will be applied in the design of subjects such as learning outcomes, content taught, examples, language used, sources selected, assessment method and management of the learning environment.

Role of applicants:

University of the Basque Country UPV/EHU:

Lucía Gallego: coordination of the project, search of collaborations and identification of areas of interest for intervention. Expert in Gender Medicine, Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases.

Sandra Sánchez-Urtaza: development of contents focused on students and young researchers and responsible for communication and divulgation. Expert in Microbiology, gender and research and communication.

Cristina Penas: development of contents focused on education and research in the area of Cellular Biology and responsible for communication and divulgation in social media. Expert in gender and cancer research and communication.

Amaia Erdozain: development of contents focused on education and research in Pharmacology. Expert in Pharmacology.

Uppsala University:

Eva Garmendia: Project coordinator Uppsala Antibiotic Center. Development of contents focused on the area of Infectious Diseases. Expert in communication, divulgation and social media.

4) Main objectives and output

Our teaching proposal aims to work on the impact of gender on health, both in research and in clinical practice launching an open online course “Gender, Science & Health” to help the academic community to develop the ability to identify and evaluate health inequalities based on sex and gender in order to design solutions. We also intend to open the knowledge to the society through the dissemination of some contents at events and through social networks and preparing materials for uploading to YouTube.

Preliminary proposed modules and their content (open to suggestions):

Module 1: Introduction and State of the Art.

Gender Medicine. Sex and gender and their impact on health and wellbeing. Situation of women in the fields of science and health, in academia and in research centres. Communication and the effect on gender bias: language, image and power.

Module 2: Putting Gender into Health Research.

Gender bias in research studies and the consequences on the generation of knowledge and the development of diagnostic methods and treatments.

Module 3: Aspects of the medicine that are detrimental to women's health.

The under/miss-diagnosis of pathologies with different symptomatology in women vs men. Over-medicalisation of women's life and the consequences of stereotypes in the health field.

Module 4: Sex and Gender in Infectious Diseases.

Gender and sex differences in terms of the immune system, susceptibility to certain infections and prognosis and the effect of antimicrobial treatments. Resistance to antibiotics and gender.

Module 5: Mental Health

The impact of gender and age on mental health. The gender gap in mental disorders. Male-female differences in some mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression and schizophrenia.

5) Timing of planned activities of the preparatory phase and implementation phase.

- From January 2024 to June 2024: search for all partners and preparation of the proposal.
- On January 22th 2024, we pretend to assist to the event “Aletta Dive: Sex matters!!!! Gender and the making of knowledge”, organized by Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health, to find partners from the Groningen university.
- June 2024: Applications to ENLIGHT Seed Funding
- July 2024: Evaluation
- September 2024: Funds available
- September 2024 to June 2025: preparation of the materials and course website, recording of the corresponding videos and Instagram reels. Communication and divulgation. Organization of a final working meeting held at the University of the Basque Country to launch the course.