Health Speech

Student’s Name:

Professors Name:

Course:

Date:

Health Speech

Gender and sex are two terms often used interchangeably to mean the same thing. However, these terms are distinct, especially from a health perspective. While gender involves a broader aspect of societal, cultural and personal perceptions of sexuality, sex entails the biological characteristics and differences in male and female genitalia. Despite this difference, they both play a role in the influence and exposure of health risks, illnesses as well as access to health information and services. With that said, the biological differences and characteristics are not adequate to account for health issues and differences that exist between men and women. However, the cultural and social constructions related to gender play a significant role in determining the experience and exposure to health and illness.

While analyzing how interactions between men and women contribute to health opportunities and constraints, a gender-based approach would be appropriate. This is attributed to the fact that gender-based relations or interactions are more multidimensional as compared to viewing it from a sexual perspective. Consequently, it is easy to understand the health differences that exist between men and women. For instance, Schofield et al. (2000) research suggest that these health differences are attributed to the gendered organization. In support of this, he suggests that men’s success in employment is what contributes to high risks of illnesses in men since they are often exposed to hazardous or unsuitable working conditions. Furthermore, in gendered organizations, men take up more hierarchical roles which are stressful making men more prone to heart diseases than the women.

Gender is also an important factor based on the ramifications involved especially when a man is experiencing any form of disability or illness. In such a case, it would be easier to comprehend these ramifications using gender other than sex as the former takes a more social approach. For instance, disability or illness can easily affect a man’s hierarchy in an organization or social status in the society. It also affects their poise hence increasing self-doubts about their masculinity. As Courtenay (2000) highlights in his research, men work diligently to ensure that their illnesses or disabilities. As for women, they readily share what their health experiences or struggles.

While a lot of evidence exists to support that gender is an important factor when it comes to health, we cannot ignore that sex as a factor also has a role to play. The contribution to health is only limited to illnesses that only affect the men or women. For instance, prostate cancer in men or ovarian cancer in women. Thus, it narrows down to what aspect of health exposure or experience is under research and analysis.

References

Courtenay, W. (2000) “Constructions of masculinity and their influence on men's well-being: a theory of gender and health.” *Social Science & Medicine 50*: 1385-1401.

Schofield, T., Connell, R., Walker, L., Wood and J. Butland, D. (2000). Understanding men's health and illness: a gender-relations approach to policy, research, and practice. *Journal of American College Health, 48*(6); 247-256.