

Tara Duffy

Gender Data Gap

I am talking to you today about the gap between men and women. Many of you may have heard about the gender pay gap, however I am talking to you about the gender data gap. This gap means many things in the world are designed for men when women's needs and lives haven't been considered. These can be very small things or they can be very big for example in a car accident a woman is 47% more likely to be seriously injured in comparison to their male counterpart, all because the safety measures have been designed around men. However, I am going to talk about this in the context of medicine.

Many women will be faced with issues when going to the doctors like having many of their worries and concerns dismissed by medical professionals. Many women have experienced their symptoms being dismissed as anxiety or that they are just "a bit of a worrier", however this isn't always true. One girl reported to the Irish Times that she had gone to her GP multiple times about her foot that was throbbing and that she would have multiple falls, the doctor however, just asked if everything at home was okay and if she was just worried about her studies. Eventually she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and a neurological disease. And in fact, this disease affects women three times more than men. This demonstrates how easily women can just be viewed as over emotional when they really are struggling.

These ideas also come from the lack of medical data on women. According to Dr Annemarie Schumacher Dimeche from the Women's Brain Project when speaking to the Irish times, when men experience chest pain, they are 2.5 times more likely to be told to consult with a cardiologist. Women and men's symptoms are different, the risks are different and the outcomes are different. This means there should be more research, however only a third of clinical trial participants are in fact women. This demonstrates how we don't know enough about women and we are therefore letting down half of the world population. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in women, we are letting women die.

It is important that women are included in medical research as in the past it has been the view that the only two differences between men and women's bodies is the reproductive organs and the endocrine system which releases hormones, but this isn't true. Women's and men's bodies react differently to medicine and illnesses alike. Also, the excuse of the menstrual cycle has been used because the release of hormones meant there were too many variables to be studied. However, I believe this should mean women should be studied in more depth as there are so many more possibilities for women to be put at risk. There have been many more excuses used over time including women's risk during child birth. Despite the fact some women don't want children they are still considered as walking incubators. All of these things effect women, affect our lives and the future of humanity.

I wanted to speak on this topic today to make people more aware about how women are put at risk in so many more ways than are commonly discussed. Yes, its important to talk about harassment in the work palace and the gender pay gap but not everyone understands or even knows about this other issue. People need to be made more aware so things can change as they already have started to and more women can feel safer and live longer happier lives.