

Sex & Gender Assessment Tool [2018]

Instructions

Use the check-boxes to indicate your assessment of sex and gender integration in each of the proposal components. The metrics are divided into 3 primary sections: 1) Literature Review & Research Objectives, 2) Research Design, Methods, & Analysis Plan, and 3) Knowledge Translation Plan. Each section includes questions on sex/gender integration, examples to illustrate each question, and a descriptive assessment scale to facilitate evaluation.

In applying the metrics, reviewers should keep four key considerations in mind:

- 1) Sex and gender are two distinct concepts. **Sex** refers to biological attributes in males and females (e.g. chromosomes, hormone levels, gene expression, etc.). **Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and identities of men, women, and gender-diverse persons.
- 2) Investigating both sex and gender may not be appropriate for the studies. The relevance of sex and gender will depend upon whether the study proposes investigation of biological or sociocultural factors. For example, clinical trials of drug therapies are more amenable to studying the impact of sex, while qualitative studies of persons' experiences with health and illness are more amenable to studying the impact of gender. To accommodate these possibilities the term "sex/gender" is used throughout the metrics to serve as shorthand for "and/or", depending on applicability in the study under review.
- 3) Not all elements of the assessment tool will apply to all types of research studies, nor all study designs. For example, some of the assessment categories will not be applicable to qualitative studies (such as ensuring sufficient sample size for powering statistical analyses).
- 4) The assessment scales are not only applicable to studies that investigate sex/gender differences, but are equally useful in study proposals focused on only one sex or gender. Understanding the role of these factors in shaping health experiences and outcomes is also important for revealing within-group differences in sex- or gender-specific studies.

Adapted From:

Day S, Mason R, Tannenbaum C, Rochon PA (2017) Essential metrics for assessing sex & gender integration in health research proposals involving human participants. PLoS ONE12(8): e0182812.

SEX AND GENDER ASSESSMENT TOOL



TITLE OF PROPOSAL: _____

REVIEWER: _____ FUNDING COMPETITION: _____

Proposal Section	Questions to Ask	Examples	Assessment Scale
1. Literature Review & Research Objectives	<p>Does the literature review include consideration of sex/gender?</p> <p>Do the research objectives include exploration of sex/gender?</p>	<p>Are knowledge, gaps or questions about sex/gender raised in the literature review?</p> <p>Are gaps or questions about sex/gender addressed in the research objectives?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent: substantial consideration of sex/gender throughout the literature review; explicit and thorough exploration of sex/gender identified in research objectives.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good: some consideration of sex/gender in literature review and research objectives, but with some potential to be expanded.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair: minimal consideration of sex/gender in literature review and research objectives, numerous critical gaps remain.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor: sex/gender not considered at all in the literature review and research objectives.</p>
2. Research Design, Methods, & Analysis Plan	<p>a) Population:</p> <p>Has sex/gender been considered in the inclusion and exclusion criteria?</p>	<p>Are some populations inappropriately excluded on the basis of sex/gender by the inclusion/exclusion criteria?</p> <p>To what extent has justification been provided for the inclusion/exclusion of populations based on sex/gender?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent: substantial justification provided for sex/gender related inclusion/exclusion criteria.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good: clear justification provided for sex/gender related inclusion/exclusion criteria, but with some potential to be expanded.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair: minimal justification provided for sex/gender related inclusion/exclusion criteria, numerous critical gaps remain.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor: no justification for sex/gender related inclusion/exclusion criteria.</p>

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2. Research Design, Methods, & Analysis Plan (Continued)	<p>Has sex/gender been considered in the calculation of sample size?</p>	<p>Has the sample size been sufficiently powered to identify potentially relevant sex/gender findings?</p>	<p>Has an <i>a-priori</i> sample size been reported? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If yes, is the estimated sample size sufficient to allow for potential sex/gender findings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
	<p>b) Participant Recruitment & Retention:</p> <p>Has sex/gender been considered in the recruitment and retention strategies to ensure as broad as possible study participation?</p>	<p>Are there potential sex/gender related barriers to participation for some populations who should be included? Consider the accompanying recruitment materials; for example, where will recruitment posters be located, and who is represented on the posters?</p> <p>Are there potential sex/gender related barriers to retention? For example, will child care be available or travel costs offset for participants? Is consideration given to sex-specific dosing strategies to prevent adverse events that may be common in males/females?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent: consideration of sex/gender in recruitment and retention strategies will ensure the broadest possible participation by study population(s).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good: some consideration given to sex/gender in the recruitment and retention strategies, but there remains some potential to further broaden participation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair: minimal inclusion of sex/gender in the recruitment and retention strategies may result in numerous populations being inappropriately excluded.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor: sex/gender not considered in recruitment and retention strategies.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable: no recruitment needed.</p>
	<p>c) Data Collection Tools:</p> <p>Do the data collection tools capture information relevant to sex/gender?</p>	<p>Do the participant intake forms and other tools (e.g. questionnaires, interview guides) capture sex (e.g. male, female) and/or gender identities (e.g. man, woman, transgender, two-spirit, etc.)?</p> <p>Will the tools used to collect data include variables to conduct analyses of the influence of sex/gender?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent: all tools reflect the widest possible range of sex/gender identities; tools will collect extensive data relevant to conducting sex/gender analyses.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good: tools reflect a range of sex/gender identities and will collect some data relevant to sex/gender, but with potential to be expanded.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair: tools reflect minimal data on sex/gender identities and numerous critical gaps remain in the collection of sex/gender relevant data.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor: no sex/gender data will be collected.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable: no primary data collection.</p>

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	<p>d) Data Analysis Plan:</p> <p>Does the proposal include a plan to analyze the impact of sex/gender on study findings?</p>	<p>Will key variables be analyzed and reported disaggregated by sex/gender?</p> <p>In single-sex/gender studies: is there a plan to investigate differences within this population?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent: all data will be analyzed in relation to sex/gender.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good: most data will be analyzed in relation to sex/gender, but there is some potential to further expand the sex/gender analyses.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair: minimal data will be analyzed in relation to sex/gender, numerous critical gaps remain.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor: no inclusion of sex/gender in the analysis plan.</p>
<p>3. Knowledge Translation Plan</p>	<p>Has sex/gender been considered in the knowledge translation plan?</p>	<p>Are knowledge translation strategies customized for relevance to a range of populations? For example, is there a plan to present findings relevant to specific participant populations based on sex/gender?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent: the knowledge translation plan explicitly notes sex/gender considerations and is tailored to the widest possible range of populations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Good: the knowledge translation plan shows some consideration of sex/gender, but there is some potential to expand the possibilities for tailoring to a range of populations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fair: numerous critical gaps remain in the knowledge translation plan's consideration of sex/gender and tailoring to a range of populations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Poor: no consideration of sex/gender in the knowledge translation plan.</p>

For additional information about this tool please access:

Day S, Mason R, Tannenbaum C, Rochon PA (2017) Essential metrics for assessing sex & gender integration in health research proposals involving human participants. PLoS ONE 12(8): e0182812. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0182812>

