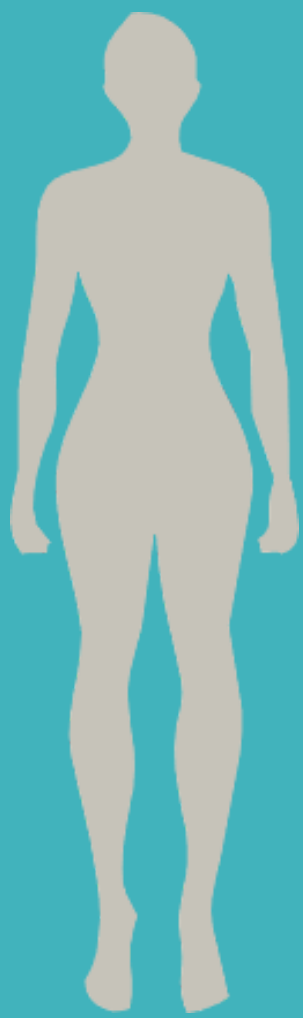


Multidimensional Framework



Moving beyond maternal and reproductive health to the life course

One of the most important developments of the past 30 years has been the transformation of “women’s health” from a narrow focus on maternal and reproductive health to a **broader, holistic, and multidimensional concept**. From **head to toe** and **across the life course**, ORWH is addressing the complex intersection of factors that affect the “health of women,” from biological variables to policies and social determinants of health, such as gender roles.

Genesis for Change

- The civil rights and women’s movements of the 1960s and ’70s gave rise to the women’s health movement, which drew attention to inequities in research and health care.
- Drug recalls revealed that many drugs posed greater health risks to women than to men – in particular, women of child-bearing age. Nearly all of the medications were tested only in men.
- The scientific community took note and responded, led by forward-thinking leaders Edward Brandt, Ruth Kirschstein, Bernadine Healy and Vivian Pinn.
- Congress pressed for change and passed laws that created ORWH and advanced the multidimensional framework.

Milestones in Change

- In the 1980s and ’90s, NIH adopted policies that increased the participation of **women** in NIH-funded clinical studies.
- The NIH Revitalization Act of 1993 required the inclusion of **women** and **minorities** in NIH-funded studies.
- The 21st Century Cures Act required NIH to expand its policy on the inclusion of children to include **individuals of all ages**.
- In 2016, the NIH Policy on Sex as a Biological Variable further advanced the multidimensional framework – by helping to ensure that potential influences of sex on health and disease are considered throughout the research process.



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