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Since four decades epidemiological research has emphasised the necessity to consider social determinants and the social distribution of illnesses in the Swiss population, particularly by gender. Gender influences social position, living conditions as well as health behaviours over the life-course which all together influence health outcomes. Despite this evidence, national health policies and strategies tend to consider gender as a background factor, if not to omit its influence on health. The Health2020 policy and the recent specific national strategies are particularly illustrative. To exclude or reduce gender as a mere biological factor however hampers the implementation of specific interventions aiming at reducing health inequalities in the name of the social justice principle.

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