

Women in Medicine

Women and the healthcare system

- Women are the majority of healthcare receivers and providers in Canada
- Approximately 80% of paid healthcare workers are women
- Women also provide most of the unpaid healthcare within the home

Exclusion of women from medicine

- Dreamily Stowe was the first female physician in Canada
- She applied in 1865 but she was rejected from the Toronto School of Medicine on the grounds of being a women
- She went to the US and graduated in 1867 from the New York Medical College for Women

Jenny Kidd Trout (1841-1921)

- The first licensed female physician in Canada
- She was offered a grand to start a women's medical college with majority of the board and staff being women
- The Women's Medical College was established in Kingston in affiliation with Queen's University, producing 34 female physicians in a span of 10 years

CIHI study 2007

- 1959- 6% of medical school graduates were women
 - 1970's- less than 25%
 - 1989- 44%
 - 2009-50%
- Women are gaining ground in a male dominated profession
- By 2006 women made up more than a third of the physician workforce

Women in Canadian medicine

- Women are 34% of all physicians and 20% of all surgical specialists (80% of all surgeons are men)
- Women are currently 0% of all medical scientists (n=24men)
- In 1940 women were just 4.1% of all MD degree recipients
 - 2007 this increased to 58.5%
 - 1997 was the first years more women received MD degrees than men
 - 50.3% of graduates were women

Equality

- In 1998 only 12% of physicians practicing surgical specialties were women
- In 2008 the number had only increased to 19.3% despite the fact that 50%+ med grads were women
- On average 53.6% of graduates entering specialties training are women but most of the choose non-surgical specialties
- Androcentrism
 - Society is mainly male-centered
 - Men are seen as the 'standard' and they often represent the human norm
 - Ex. Mankind.
 - "one small step for man, on giant leap for mankind"
 - But this is a false generic and reflects a hidden bias against women

Patriarchy

1. Social organizations in which the father is the head of the family and ancestry and inheritance are traces in the male line
2. A society organized according to the principles of patriarchy

Science and Technology

- Theoretical approaches
 - Scientific determinism
 - Structural functionalist
 - Science and technology emerge because society needs them
 - Science provides an assumed objective truth that helps us make rational decisions
 - Therefore science and technology are functional for society
 - Conflict (Marxist)
 - This is when science and technology only benefit a few people
 - It is a response to capitalist needs for increased efficiency or profit
 - Dalcon Shield \$2.375billion Lawsuit
 - Evidence in the law suit showed that the manufacturer had knowingly sold UID despite the fact that the copper in them could cause damage
 - Postmodern
 - Queer theory
 - Feminist
 - Feminism is a theoretical project whose purposes are to understand the power structures, social practices and institutions that disadvantage and marginalize women, and to devise innovative strategies of social transformation that will promote women's emancipation
 - Women's gendered role in society influence their health
 - Gender stereotypes negatively affect health, doctors are more likely to say women's physical symptoms are psychological in nature
 - Over medicalization of normal aspects of women's and men's lives

- Pregnancy, birth and menopause for women
- Hair loss and erectile dysfunction for men
- 3 views on feminist criticism of science
 - Feminists empiricism:
 - ❖ Argues that sexism and Androcentrism are biases in science.
 - ❖ These biases can be corrected by keeping to the Scientific Method, however more women would see this bias and correct it
 - Feminist standpoint
 - ❖ Gender of the observer can benefit the objectivity of the research
 - ❖ The problem here is can we speak of one feminist view? Essentialism critique
 - Feminist postmodernism
 - ❖ Can science embedded in male projects be used to emancipate women?

Paternalism in medicine

- There is a belief that physicians know best, this is because of the past control by mainly male dominated medical establishments

Feminist Epistemology

- The study of knowledge and justified belief
- Concern with creation and distribution of knowledge

Socio-cultural issues

- Breast feeding
 - Medical knowledge of benefits of breast feeding for mother and child
 - “breast is best”
 - In society you are essentially a ‘good mother’ if you Brest feed
 -

Race, class and gender

- Low income and colored women were not part of the first two waves of feminism
- Instead the first and second waves focused on opportunities for middle class white women.

Abortion

- Abortion was illegal until 1969 and then it was only medically necessary
- In order for this decision to be made a therapeutic abortion committee was required

- The procedure required the presence of 3 doctors and many hospitals did not have enough doctors and so the procedure was to be done in an accredited or approved hospital
 - However there was no legal requirement to ensure this would occur
- In 1988 it became Morgentaler Supreme Court Decision
- However not all Canadian provinces are in support of abortions
- P.E.I is not in full support of abortions, and so there are some restrictions put on the procedure
 - It cannot be done in a private clinic, and the involvement of 2 physicians is mandatory

Social construction

- Scientism: the naïve belief in all scientific knowledge-claims

Frances Kelsey

- Known as the midwife to modern pharmaceutical regulation
- Withheld approval of thalidomide which was used to treat morning sickness and to aid sleep, pending more research
- She looked at the drug's teratogenic effects and the it was eventually withdrawn all over the world
- Her work resulted in better drug testing and clinical trial regulations
- Canada was the last country to stop sales of this drug in early 1962

Feminism

- Women's gendered roles in society influence their health
 - Ex. Caregiver role, receiving lower income
- Gender stereotypes negatively affect health
 - Doctors tend to say women's physical symptoms are psychological in nature
 - They may also have a bias towards the womanly/reproductive parts rather than the rest of the body
- Over medicalization of normal aspects of women's and men's lives
 - Pregnancy, birth and menopause for women
 - Hair loss, erectile dysfunction for men

Paternalism in medicine

- This is the belief that physicians know best, as healthcare was controlled mainly by males

Feminist epistemology

- The study of knowledge and justified belief
- It is concerned with creation and distribution of knowledge
- In the 19th Century and early 20th century knowledge in women was invisible and disregarded

Breast feeding: socio-cultural issues

- The notion of breast is best is prevalent in society
- There is a social expectation of 'good mothers' breast feed
- This notion is supported by the medical knowledge of benefits of breast feeding for the mother and child

Feminist criticism of science

- There are 3 views:
 - Feminists empiricism
 - This argues that sexism and Androcentrism are biases in science, but these can be corrected by keeping to the scientific method
 - More women see these biases and make efforts to correct it
 - Feminist standpoint
 - The gender of the observer can affect the objectivity of the research
 - Feminist postmodernism:
 - Can a science so embedded in male projects be used to emancipate women??

Legal Status in Canada (surrogacy)

- In Canada surrogacy is permitted however it is illegal to pay the surrogate mother for her labours
- The only payment is to cover the surrogate's expenses for treatment and/or medication
- The purchasing of ovum, sperm and embryo's from a donor is also illegal under AHRA section 7
- In order to get around this, Canadians would be surrogates to citizens of the US. Because payment for surrogacy isn't illegal in the US, the Canadians would be impregnated and paid in the US and come back to Canada to give birth- mainly because of the free healthcare benefits

IVF

- Assisted reproduction clinics
 - In Ontario IVF is covered only for medically necessary reasons and even with that the couple can get 1 trial
 - Ex infertility due to blocked fallopian tubes
 - Quebec however funds 3 trials
- IVF is fairly pricey costing between \$5000-\$10000 for a single cycle and is not covered under all provincial plans
 - Like stated above Ontario has certain conditions and Quebec made the decision to include it in summer 2010-at a costly price
 - Paying for eggs, sperm, surrogates
- IVF is invasive and no risk free, there are a number of things that could possibly go wrong
- There is the issue of implanting 3 or more in a patient
 - Ex the issue of octomom

- There was a lot of criticism of the fertility of the doctor as colleagues believe the mother should have been sent for a psych consult
 - This led to legal questions around informed consent for trials
- Suelemans physician defended his decision saying 70% of the programs didn't respect the guidelines
- This led to another investigation in which the same doctor transferred 6 embryos into a 48-years old whom eventually had quadruplets
- At first her physician was put on 5 yrs. probation and had to attend a mandatory ethics course
- The physician eventually had his medical licence revoked

Assisted or Artificial Insemination

- There are many policy concerns when it comes to assisted/artificial insemination
 - There legal, ethical and economic issues
- With donations such as sperm donations rising concerns have been brought on
 - The fact in past the regulations were lighter on sperm donations there would be many children who were conceived through artificial insemination that could search for their father to find that this man has fathered many children
 - There is the other issue on whether the sperm could be used even after the donor is deceased
- Legalities
 - There has been cases where the wrong sperm/ egg was implanted in the woman
 - An example of this is the 2002 case where a white British woman gave birth to black twins
 - After investigation it was revealed that the sperm used was not her husbands, and the courts were left to decide who owns the offspring
- Feminist critique of surrogacy
 - Some feminist see surrogacy as an exploitation of women's body
 - Many young women are being target in ad campaigns
 - A lot of western women are now hiring women from third world countries to be surrogate mothers
 - Because being a surrogate brings in money feminists wonder if they are being forced into surrogacy by spouses as a form of income
 - Many of these women are uneducated as so do they know what their getting themselves into it and so they are not giving full and proper consent
 - Some clinics force them to stay at the clinic for the entire duration of pregnancy- ethical issues on the control of these women, as well as the fact that these women are neglecting their own children
 - Other ethical issues raising from this is the issue of abortion
 - An example illustrating this is the case of a BC couple you contracted a surrogate but wanted her to abort when tests showed the possibility of Down's Syndrome
 - The surrogate refused to abort, however the contract said the parents would have no financial or parental responsibility for raising the child if the surrogate did not abort

Informed consent it:

- A legal requirement for physicians
- Ethical doctrine rooted in autonomy
- Interpersonal processes physicians and other health professionals interact with patients to select an appropriate course of medical care
- Conditions of genuine consent:
 - Consent is given by an autonomous person
 - Consent is given by a competent person
 - Consent is informed and made knowingly
 - Consent is given freely and voluntarily
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Modern day eugenics

- Sometimes artificial/assisted insemination is seen as eugenics as there is a large emphasis in donor profiles on intelligence and physical attributes
- In order for this to proceed and prosper scientists have to walk a fine line between making the customer happy and avoiding controversy

Pre-natal screening

- There are now new technologies such as ultrasounds, CVS, IVF embryo stage that help with fetal monitoring
- It allows for screening for medical concerns such as inherited diseases, as well as social concerns such as gender in some cultures
- There are issues in what kind of conditions one should screen for such as cleft palate, musicality, gayness, deafness etc.,

Genetic testing and sex selection

- This is usually used for “family balance”
- However some wonder if this is an example of eugenics and issues of Gender equality also arise
 - Ex in China because of the offspring quota most families want boys rather than girls