

KEYNOTE

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### *Historical Research and the Present Day Discussion on Male Health*

The present discourse on male health refers too often to an obsolete, monolithic image of manhood and favours contrastive thinking in terms of easily definable collectives of »men« and »women«. Men's health is strongly influenced by historical development. This is most evident in the considerable changes in difference between male and female life expectancy during the last 150 years. The gender-specific distribution of work has changed considerably health risks and resources over the last five generations. The variable connection between manliness and risk behaviour has also affected their health in various ways. Gender-specific marking of health as a female field has created thresholds for men when accessing this field. Nevertheless, men's pretended continuous silence about

their health is a myth. But their utilization of medical provision remains different. Women's current consumption of medical services is the result of a historical process and cannot simply become the standard for men. The history of male health creates a productive contrast to the approach of the health sciences which focuses primarily on the present situation.