

The 11th Advances in Qualitative Methods Conference
October 7–8, 2010, Vancouver, Canada

Advances in Qualitative Methods

Abstracts

International Journal of Qualitative Methods
Volume 9, Issue 4

December 2010

“You Know How Men/Women Are”: The Complexities of Gender Comparison in Cardiovascular Rehabilitation

Cheryl Pritlove

York University

Jan Angus

University of Toronto

Lisa Seto

University of Toronto

Craig Dale

University of Toronto

Marnie Kramer-Kile

University of Toronto/Mount Royal University

Alexander M. Clark

University of Alberta

Beth Abramson

Saint Michael's Hospital

Jennifer Lapum

Ryerson University

Susan Marzolini

Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

Jennifer Price

Women's College Hospital

Paul Oh

Toronto Rehabilitation Institute

Recent approaches to gender theory challenge unitary definitions of gender identity, positing a multiplicity of femininities and masculinities. Recently, some authors have pointed out that investigations of men's and women's experiences of cardiovascular disease are often implicitly based on binary assumptions about gender. This paper works from a sociological framework of gender to discuss analysis of experiences with cardiovascular rehabilitation (CR). We uncovered differences in experience (both between and among men and women) that shaped patterns of participation. Our research took a realist approach to the analysis of interview data from 16 women and 16 men recruited from three CR programs in Toronto, Canada. Adopting key Bourdieusian concepts of capital, field, and habitus, and informed by McNay's feminist writings, we sought to expand on current investigations of gender in CR. This paper begins from participants' frequent typifications of the opposite gender, often embedded in statements such as "you know how men/women are." We also discuss reflexively our own struggles to develop comparative statements about men's and women's experiences. Participants' access to and possession of capital, as well as their varied positions in and across social fields seemed to impact upon the way women and men experienced or expressed their gender identity, identities that were not always aligned with binary definitions of feminine and masculine performance. In the context of illness, it seems that gender identity and gender relations within specific social fields may interact with flows of capital to facilitate or constrain participation in CR.