

Gender Attitudes and U.S. Women's Health

Susan E. Short and Rebecca Wang
Department of Sociology and Population Studies and Training Center
Brown University

For decades, demographers have elaborated how gender and gendered experiences shape health. Much of this research has focused on sex differences in morbidity and mortality, and analyses of gender gaps – effectively anchoring our discussion at the individual level. And, yet, ample evidence reminds us that we live in a gendered world. Our schools, families, and workplaces are highly gendered institutions. Moreover, sexism and sexual harassment persist. In this paper, we investigate how gender context shapes health. We focus on women's self-assessed health in the U.S. Linking state-level data on gender attitudes to individual-level data on health for a period of more than twenty years, we leverage cross-state variation during a period of significant change of gender attitudes, to examine how gender context is associated with changes in health.