

# Sex

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# Sex

## Identifying and definitional attributes

**Metadata item type:** Glossary Item

**METEOR identifier:** 750030

**Registration status:** [Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022  
[Youth Justice](#), Standard 15/02/2022

**Definition:** Sex is understood in relation to sex characteristics, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.

Sex is often used interchangeably with [gender](#), however they are distinct concepts and it is important to differentiate between them.

## Collection and usage attributes

**Comments:** "A person's sex is based upon their sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. While typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy, a person's reported sex can change over the course of their lifetime and may differ from their sex recorded at birth" (ABS 2021.)

"Sex refers to ... chromosomal, gonadal and anatomical characteristics" (AGD 2015.)

When comparing the concepts of sex and gender:

- Sex is understood in relation to sex characteristics. Sex recorded at birth refers to what was determined by sex characteristics observed at birth or in infancy
- Gender is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience.

While they are related concepts, caution should be exercised when comparing counts for sex with those for gender.

## Source and reference attributes

**Submitting organisation:** Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

**Origin:** ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2021. Standard for sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation variables. Canberra: ABS, viewed 6 October 2021 <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/latest-release>

AGD (Attorney-General's Department) 2015. Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender, viewed 6 October 2021 <https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/publications/australian-government-guidelines-recognition-sex-and-gender>

## Relational attributes

**Related metadata references:** See also [Gender](#)  
[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022  
[Youth Justice](#), Standard 15/02/2022

**Metadata items which use  
this glossary item:**

[Admitted patient care NBEDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 17/12/2021

[Admitted subacute and non-acute hospital care NBEDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 20/10/2021

[Emergency service care NBEDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 20/10/2021

[Gender](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Youth Justice](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Non-admitted patient emergency department care NMDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 20/10/2021

[Non-admitted patient NBEDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 20/10/2021

[Person—gender, code X](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Person—gender, text X\[X\(99\)\]](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Person—sex](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Youth Justice](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Person—sex, code X](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Youth Justice](#), Superseded 27/03/2023

[Person—sex, text X\[X\(99\)\]](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Sex](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Youth Justice](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Sex code X](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 15/02/2022

[Youth Justice](#), Standard 15/02/2022