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Lessons learned on sex, gender and sexual orientation in large-scale general population cohort studies.

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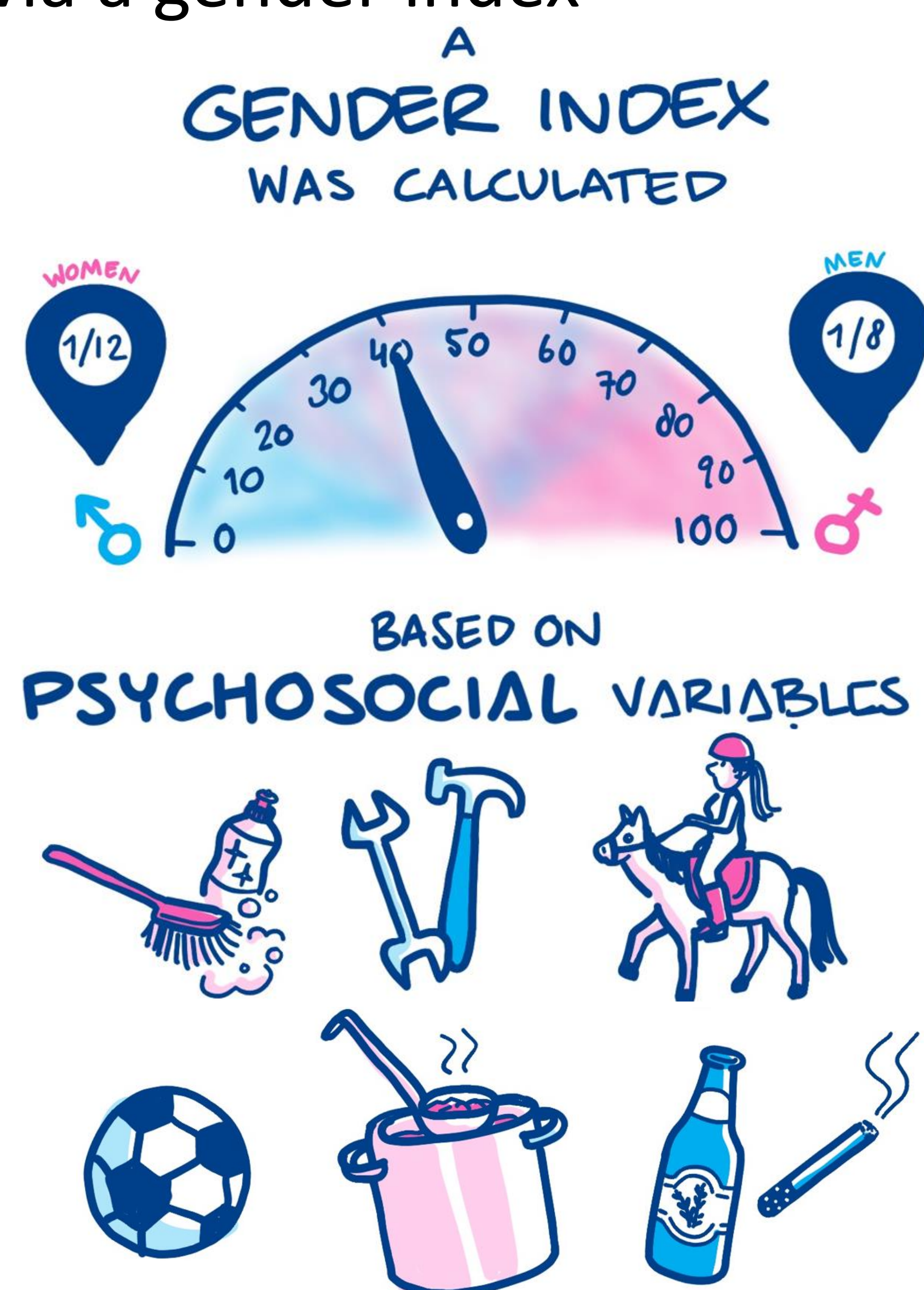
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Lessons learned on sex, gender and sexual orientation in large-scale general population cohort studies.

Aim: to discuss the pitfalls and lessons learned on including and assessing sex, gender and sexual orientation in a large-scale cohort study (N>167,000)

ISSUE	Sex	Gender	Sexual Orientation	ISSUE
PROPOSED SOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistently operationalized via municipally-registered sex Two-step approach, fitting the Dutch context <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Could you indicate your sex assigned at birth, as stated on your birth certificate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male (M) Female (F) Non-binary (X) Were you born with a variation in sex characteristics (this is sometimes called intersex variation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions on gender were lacking no questions referring to specific gender dimensions Gender identity can be assessed via a categorized item that combines sex assigned at birth and current identity Gender roles can be assessed via a gender index 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions on SO were lacking; sex of current partner was surveyed Two-step approach, distinguishing between attraction to sex and gender <p>Could you indicate on the scales below what describes you best?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I'm sexually attracted to men <p>Not at all <=> Very Strongly</p> I'm sexually attracted to masculine people <p>Not at all <=> Very strongly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No generalizable rule on how to survey SO; debate on what constitutes SO 	PROPOSED SOLUTION

Obtaining data on sex, gender and SO is pivotal in general population cohort studies:

- (1) It avoids purposive sampling methods of LGBTQIA+ populations;
- (2) It avoids the reinforcement of the status quo in which gender/SO minority populations are disadvantaged, both in research and in health outcomes