

Sensitive variable	Definition
<i>Social</i>	Variables based on an individual's lived experience. Frequently self-reported.
Race	A social construct based on perceived physical differences (14–16) that often acts as a proxy for various social and health consequences of racism in modeling (17). Often paired with ethnicity, though they are not strictly equivalent. Includes no biological information.
Ethnicity	A social construct based on shared culture, language, geography, religion, and history (15,18). Often paired with race, though they are not strictly equivalent. Includes no biological information.
Gender	A social construct referring to an individual's self-presentation in society, informed by culture, psychology, and society (19). Though distinct from sex, it often indirectly captures sex's impact.
<i>Biological</i>	Variables based on an individual's biology.
Genetic ancestry	Genetic similarities between people due to common ancestors (18). Distinct from race. Strictly biological.
Sex	The biological factors used to categorize individuals as male, female, or intersex (20). Since 2016, it has been a required covariate in NIH-funded research (19). Though distinct from gender, it often indirectly captures gender's impact.