

experiencing physical symptoms, go to the doctors. "From the experience of going to the doctor, people learn that sickness is principally a matter of organic disorder because this is what captures the doctor's attention" (Hart, 1985:95). In this way the social construction of sickness is formed when visiting the doctor (Hart, 1985). If medicine and sickness were entirely a social construction then there would not have been the many medical achievements, such as the eradication of small pox and so the knowledge must be valid and not wholly socially constructed (Nettleton, 2006). It could be argued however, that some medical achievements work out of pure luck and some have a placebo effect as if we are told that something will make us better and thus we believe it.

In answering the question, describing and explaining social constructionism using examples, I have considered some of the many different types of social constructions. These social constructions show that social constructions are everywhere and how powerful social constructionism is. For example, the idea that even your body, yourself could be formed out of the ideas and knowledge of society and that you have no biological identity is one that many people would find hard to relate to (Nettleton, 2006). Society is made up of social constructions and so medicine, sexuality and childhood are just three of the limitless amounts of different constructions that we experience. These different social constructions are normative and they reinforce existing power relations. This results in a degree of oppression, although as the constructions are normative this process continues to happen and when new social constructions are formed they are still oppressive, as the same power relations are still present. This results in an oppressive social constructive cycle.

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