

Knowledge and Attitude of Future Health Care Workers and The Consequences of Gender Bias within Women's Health

Seep¹, Sanjana Sandeep Sharma¹, Steffi Paulson John¹, Yusraa Karachi¹, Jayadevan Sreedharan².

Introduction

- Women of all different ethnicities and minorities are one of the most underserved groups in healthcare.
- Implicit biases arise from societal taboos and affect the quality of health care that female patients receive
- This creates a gender gap in health care services.

The objectives of this study were to assess; general awareness of women's reproductive health, implicit gender biases, gendered perception of pain and autonomy of reproductive health choices



Materials and Methods

- A cross sectional study among students studying at a medical university in the UAE.
- This research was approved by the IRB at Gulf Medical University.
- The sampling strategy was nonrandom in nature with a total of 428 students.
- Data analysis was done with statistical software and a chi square test was used for association.

Fig 1. Comparison of perception of tolerance of pain between male and females

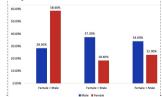
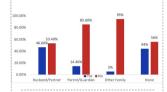


Fig 2. Participant's opinions about autonomy with regards to abortion



Results

- Females had positive connotations with menstruation and contraception.
- Males were reluctant to discuss these issues with future female patients.
- Results depicted statistically significant associations for implicit bias and gender.
- Regarding gendered perception of pain, 18.4% of women and twice as many men (37.3%) believed that women have a lower pain tolerance than men.
- Males had more negative biases than females regarding female autonomy over reproductive health choices.

Conclusion

- The study showed that there were serious implicit biases within future healthcare professionals.
- These biases will then become the attitudes that govern the way female healthcare is approached.
- In several developing countries with certain social taboos and confines, medical professionals are the only source of unbiased information.
- Unless biases surrounding female pain and diagnoses and policing female reproductive autonomy are not consciously resolved, women shall continue to bear the ill effects of gender inequity within healthcare.

