



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

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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 non-random 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

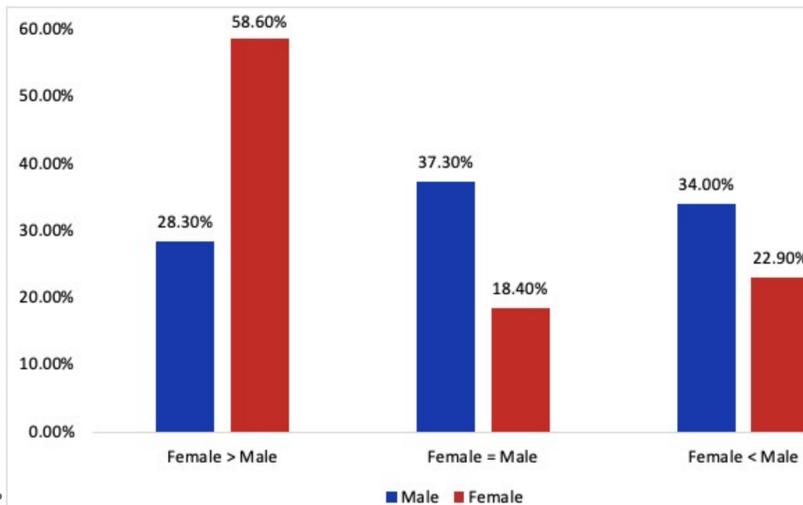
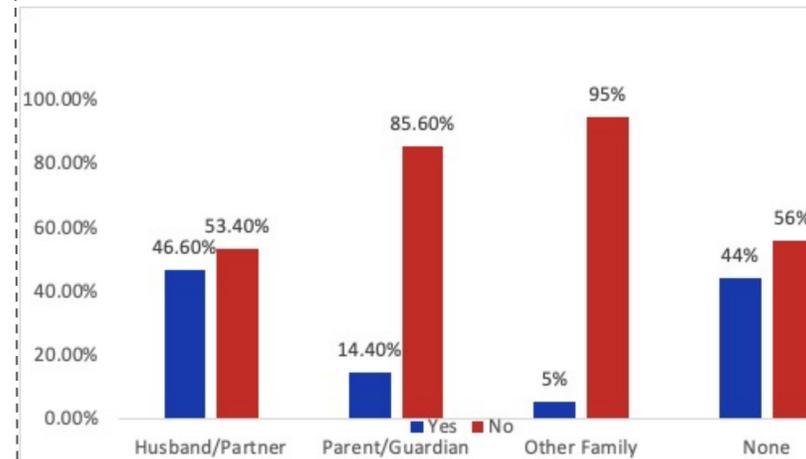


Fig 2. Participant's opinions about autonomy with regards to abortion



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.

