

Female doctors; an easy target for violence?

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Madam, we read the article "Multiple Dimensions of Violence Against Healthcare Providers in Karachi: Results from A Multi-Centre Study from Karachi" by Baig et al (Vol. 68, No. 8, August 2018). This article has drawn a spotlight on the neglected and unpublicized issue.

Health care workers are sixteen times more prone to incidents of violence.¹ A recent study among healthcare providers in Karachi showed a staggering 65.6% participants as victims of abuse. Data from previous studies asserted that females are less likely target of physical violence.² However, female physicians were found to have a reduced sense of safety while on call.³ Regardless, two recent incidents in Ruth Pfau Hospital Karachi may possibly support the idea of female healthcare workers not being immune from physical violence.

In the month of June 2018, attendants of a patient, who had sadly passed away, upon hearing the news, broke into the female resident's room to not only verbally assault but also physically torture a pregnant female on-call doctor in medicine ward.⁴ A few days following this condemnable act, a similar occurrence at a surgical ward was highlighted by media in which a lady doctor was put under torment by another patient's attendant who had a fatal Myocardial Infarction.⁵

Psychological and physical abuse of doctors results in occupation burden, decreased job contentment and poor patient care outcomes.¹ Hence, a single act of violence negatively impacts the entire health care system. Effective

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measures to reduce the overcrowding of attendants and to minimize the waiting time is crucial to avoid these dreadful situations. Hospital management must hire adequate staff to nullify the chances of a medical mistake or a similar negligence. Also, a healthy working atmosphere should be provided in hospitals with a well-organized security system. Doctors, nurses, and paramedics should be thoroughly guided through workshops or routine training sessions to deal with such mishaps and be encouraged to report incidents without fear.

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