

# The effect of female medical interns and residents' increased awareness of medical ethics principles in improving reproductive health and reducing abortion of women referring to Amir Al-Momenin Hospital of Zabol

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## Abstract:

**Introduction:** The medical staff's inappropriate behavior with patients and ignoring the medical ethics and patients' rights provides brings about the complains made against the medical staff. The key to success is the relationship between patients and doctors.

**Methods:** The present study is a descriptive one. The data collection tool was a two-part researcher-made questionnaire. The first part includes the demographic characteristics and the second part contains 20 questions on the awareness of medical ethics principles. The questions were prepared after studying the related texts on the principles of medical ethics and using the ideas of experts of medical ethics.

**Findings:** The awareness score of medical ethics principles was 43.9 from the maximum 20. In the present study, the awareness was at an average level based on the criteria mentioned in the research tool.

**Discussion and conclusion:** Given the findings of the present study and the awareness level of medical ethics principles, it is essential to review "professional ethics" course for medical students so that the concepts will be more practical. With respect to ethical issues, an average level of awareness and performance is not desirable and attempts must be made toward promoting and reaching it to the desirable level intended.

**Key words:** awareness, medical ethics principles, health, abortion, women

## INTRODUCTION

The medical staff's inappropriate behavior with patients and ignoring the medical ethics and patients' rights provides brings about the complains made against the medical staff. The key to success is the relationship between patients and doctors. This relationship can reduce anxiety, worry, depression, and it can ultimately help the patient feel healthy and reduce the complains made owing to wrong measures taken by the staff (1). Talking with the patient over the clinical doubts and treatment methods available helps the patient become aware of the complexities of medicine and lets him make realistic and reasonable decisions by asking necessary questions and thus assume responsibility for the treatment process (2). The patient's behavior is the outcome of a decision made based on awareness. In other words, this is often taken for granted that the patients primarily attempts to know or collect information about a subject and then forms an idea or attitude by reasoning or feeling that is likely to be his favorite behavior (3). The individuals' performance in an organization depends on individual, environmental, and vocational factors. Failures are likely to result from their attitudes, lack of information, or lack of motivation and interest in work (4). Awareness and knowledge motivate the person's need to know more. Awareness and knowledge increase the individual's decision-making power and helps him direct and guide his behavior (5). Although awareness doesn't mean behavioral change, it can be a determining factor for the individual's medical

behaviors (6). The individuals' level of knowledge and skill can be promoted through education, so that they can do their vocational duties more properly and be prepared for higher positions and responsibilities. Legal and ethical issues of reproductive health are of great importance in many aspects (7). Designing new treatment and medical plans and methods in the domain of reproductive health has provided new options for the women at reproductive age including new screening, diagnosis, and treatment methods. Moreover, the technological achievements have created numerous ethical issues for providers of reproductive health services, women, and the society to adjust with the advances created. Over the history, abortion has been often a controversial issue and all human civilizations and religions have had their own views towards it (9). There have been times when it has been completely forbidden and it has been allowed with limitations and under special conditions. However, there have been times when it has been conducted without any limitations. Abortion is one of the most challenging ethical issues. Although 2000 years have passed from its history, it has not been ethically solved yet (10).

## METHOD

The present study is a descriptive one. The data collection tool was a two-part researcher-made questionnaire. The first part includes the demographic characteristics and the second part contains 20 questions on the awareness of medical ethics principles. The questions were prepared

after studying the related texts on the principles of medical ethics and using the ideas of experts of medical ethics. The validity of the questionnaire was studied through content validation method by the faculty members of School of Medicine at Zabol University of Medical Sciences. Moreover, the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by using Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis was conducted by using descriptive statistics including standard mean and frequency percentage in SPSS 22. The level of significance was considered to be less than a half.

### FINDINGS

In the present study, the female medical interns and residents' awareness of the medical ethics principles was studied and discussed at obstetrics and gynecology ward of Amir Al-Momenin Hospital of Zabol in 2016. The awareness score of medical ethics principles was 43.9 from the maximum 20. In the present study, the awareness was at an average level based on the criteria mentioned in the research tool. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between awareness score and experience, marital status, and number of work shifts. Individuals with more experience enjoy more awareness.

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is of great importance to listen to women and their families, hear their tragic stories as well as their anxieties, and know the anxieties of service providers so that we know how to act responsibly and ethically as an ethical person and a professional service provider (8). This is a critical and exciting time for both women and service providers indicating the importance of learning the ethics. Thus, given the importance, extent of services provided, and the range of service recipients of reproductive health including kids, women, and men, giving more attention to legal and ethical issues of reproductive health can promote the quality of the services provided. This will not only satisfy the patients' needs and preserve their rights, but it will also help service providers to provide the services within an ethical and legal framework (11). Knowledge or information motivates the individual's need to learn more, and it will increase his decision-making power by affecting his ideas and actions, and help him direct and guide his behavior (12). The present study aims at studying the female medical interns and residents' awareness of medical ethics principles at obstetrics and gynecology ward of Amir Al-Momenin Hospital of Zabol in 2016. The awareness score of medical standards principles was in an average level. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between awareness score and number of work shifts and work experience. In the study conducted by Basiri Moghadam, the medical staff were highly aware of patient rights charter. This difference is likely to be owing to their employment, average age of medical staff, and their experiences. Ethics are human's best and most valuable capital. Each patient has his own mental and physical

aspect. It is often observed that ignoring patients' needs, inappropriate treatment with the patient, and ignoring his personality and independence hurt him much more than the physical pain. Given the findings of the present study and the awareness level of medical ethics principles, it is essential to review "professional ethics" course for medical students so that the concepts will be more practical. With respect to ethical issues, an average level of awareness and performance is not desirable and attempts must be made toward promoting and reaching it to the desirable level intended.

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