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Free Paper Session Theme 1: Healthcare Practices and Professional Diversity

TALK 1 GENDER DISTRIBUTION FOR SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS ON GERMAN OPHTHALMIC CONFERENCES – A BASELINE STUDY

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Background The number of female ophthalmologists in Germany has risen to approximately 50%. There has been no research conducted on gender-specific disparities among speakers, chairpersons, and program committees of ophthalmological congresses in Germany. This study aims to investigate whether there are differences in gender representation in recent years.

Methods Data collection included the conference programs and information from the managing committees of five important German ophthalmological congresses for 2013, 2022 and 2023. The numbers of female and male speakers and chairpersons were identified, also gender distributions in the specific program committees.

Results In total, the percentage of female speakers across all years and conferences surveyed averaged 25%, while female chairs averaged 17%. The female percentage in the program committees was 0% to 17%. There was an increase in percentage of female speakers over ten years (2013-2023). The percentage of female chairs was in general lower than the percentage of female speakers for all conferences (between 11% and 26% in 2023). Only for the German Ophthalmological Society (DOG) there was a statistically significant increase over the ten years ($p_{\text{trend}} < 0.01$).

Discussion The representation of women as speakers and chairpersons at German ophthalmology conferences is low. Although there has been an increase in female representation over time, it remains lower than the overall proportion of women in the profession in 2023. Significant differences are observed between various conferences. Further investigation into the underrepresentation of women at these conferences is necessary and measures to encourage greater female participation at congresses should be implemented.

Talk 2 IMPACT OF NHS ENGLAND UNIFORM POLICIES ON MUSLIM FEMALE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

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10.1136/bmjoo-2025-WVUK.2

Background The '2020 NHS England Uniform and Workwear: guidance for NHS employers' has made clear provision for religious head coverings in theatre and adjustments to bare below elbow (BBE) rules. However, there is great variability in how this guidance is implemented in local uniform policies. There is limited understanding as to how this affects Muslim women in healthcare.

Methods A quantitative self-completed cross-sectional survey was conducted online via Qualtrics software over a period of one month from 31/08/2024 to 30/09/2024. Muslim female healthcare professionals or healthcare students in NHS England since April 2020 were eligible to take part. All responses were recorded anonymously. HRA approval was not required.

Results Provisional results show a total of 430 responses were received. Of the respondents, 35% were doctors, 28% were medical/dental students, 11% were nurses and 26% were other healthcare professionals. 27% of those that work in theatres were prevented from wearing their headscarf. 72% of respondents had been asked to be BBE when not engaged in direct patient care activity. 47% felt they were treated differently at work due to the uniform policy. Due to hospital uniform policies, 46% felt their mental health had been affected with 33% having considered changing job roles and 31% having considered leaving the NHS. Furthermore, 66% did not feel comfortable raising concerns with their supervisors.

Conclusion NHS England uniform policies are having a profound impact on Muslim female healthcare professionals. There is a pressing need to increase awareness and implement national guidance more widely.

Talk 3 AUDIT OF TOPICAL CHLORAMPHENICOL PRESCRIPTIONS: ADHERENCE TO NATIONAL GUIDELINES IN A GENERAL PRACTICE

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10.1136/bmjoo-2025-WVUK.3

Background Chloramphenicol is frequently prescribed for eye infections in general practice, despite being available over the counter. Concerns have arisen regarding its overprescription, which may contribute to antibiotic resistance and unnecessary exposure to potential side effects from systemic absorption. According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, many eye infections are self-limiting, and antibiotics should be reserved for severe purulent or specific cases. This audit aimed to assess compliance with guidelines for chloramphenicol prescribing in a general practice.

Methods Chloramphenicol prescriptions issued between January 2023 to September 2024 were retrieved from EMIS and evaluated against NICE guidelines. Appropriate prescribing was defined by either purulent discharge, bacterial conjunctivitis symptoms lasting over 7 days, contact lens user, post-procedure, or anterior blepharitis. Visual acuity (VA) documentation at presentation was also reviewed.

Results Out of the 146 prescriptions audited, 65% were for 0.5% eye drops and 35% for 1% ointment. Median age was 44.7 years (0-92). 74.7% (109) of prescriptions did not meet the criteria for appropriate prescribing. The most common reasons for inappropriate prescribing were non-purulent symptoms (29.5%), symptoms lasting fewer than seven days (22.6%), and unnecessary treatment for styes (11.6%). Only 16% of cases documented patient-reported changes in VA.

Conclusion This audit highlighted significant non-compliance with prescribing guidelines. A practice-wide reminder regarding chloramphenicol indications, and the importance of documenting VA was recommended. Emphasising adherence to