



## Gynecologist-Patient Relationship: A Sociological Investigation of Hospitals in Twin Cities of Pakistan

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International.



### ABSTRACT

The research was conducted on “Gynecologist-patient relationship: A case study of hospitals in twin cities”. This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between doctor and patient specifically gynecologist attitude towards their respective patients. The main aim of this study was to explore the gynecologist and the patient relationship in hospitals. The researcher used qualitative study to identify the attitude of gynecologists. For the purpose of data collection one to one in-depth interview were conducted from pregnant patients (females). The researcher used snowball and purposive sampling technique to collect data. The current research shows that who are professional gynecologist prefer not to treat their own family member because they are emotionally attach with them. Most of the patients were comfortable with female gynecologist rather than male gynecologist. In the last two decades, with special reference to Pakistan, there are significant changes in the structure of society which have influenced and modified the behavior of gynecologists and patient as well as their role relationship. Five decades ago, the gynecologists were few and largely came from upper strata and the patients also were very much traditional and therefore unable to interact with the gynecologists. But for the last two decades, more and more gynecologists are coming from middle class families and the patients are going to be more and more familiarized with the techniques

## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between doctors and patients is fundamental to medical practice and plays a crucial role in ensuring high-quality healthcare during diagnosis and treatment. This bond serves as a cornerstone of modern medical ethics. From the outset of their training, medical students are taught—even before entering clinical settings—to foster professional relationships with patients, safeguard their dignity, and honor their privacy.

In the field of social science, health is viewed as a multidimensional human condition encompassing four key aspects: physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. According to the World Health Organization's 1948 constitution, health is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of illness or disability."

The patient- doctor has two fundamental components [1]. The first is the doctor's care, skill and knowledge; the second is information giving to help the individual make decisions. Hence, communication and trust are essential in this relationship. The problem arises when doctors see patients as sick people from whom to remove information or to whom to inform advice, and they therefore ignore a vital purpose of communication, which is to initiate and enhance the relationship with their patients [2].

Feeling confident in assisting gynecologists during patient care can significantly improve healthcare outcomes. Effective communication and professional behavior are crucial in building a strong gynecologist-patient relationship. Key aspects of a gynecologist's behavior include maintaining appropriate eye contact, using clear and understandable language, and fostering trust. This study emphasizes both communication and behavioral factors in enhancing this relationship [3].

In Pakistan, a developing nation with limited healthcare infrastructure, many hospitals lack sufficient medical resources. Combined with a high illiteracy rate, this creates a significant gap between gynecologists and their patients. Patients often experience frustration, anger, or dissatisfaction due to unmet expectations regarding consultations, communication approaches, or the level of empathy shown by their doctors. In many cases, poor or unprofessional communication from gynecologists negatively impacts patient well-being [4].

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examination the state of mind of gynecologists.
2. To investigate the problems faced by patients during medical checkups.

## LITERATURE RIVIEW

Communication between gynecologists and patient is a key tool of doctor-patient relationship. Gynecologists must be cooperative with patients and gynecologist's behavior must be same with every patient. The patient also has good communication skills because the patient is unable to express their feelings and emotions then the gynecologists cannot do anything [5]. In the western countries it is a professional norm that gynecologists do not treat the member of his/her family except for minor illness. The reason behind is that he/she has natural emotional affiliation with his/her family members. For instance, it might be difficult for gynecologists to separate his emotions from his professional work

if he starts surgical operation for his own daughter. In such a situation gynecologist may not be able to remain “functionally specific” or to have universalistic orientations.

In the western countries it is a professional norm that gynecologists do not treat the member of his/her family except for minor illness. The reason behind is that he/she has natural emotional affiliation with his/her family members. So, it might be difficult for gynecologists to make objective medical decision regarding the health of his/her own family members. For instance, it might be difficult for gynecologists to separate his emotions from his professional work if he starts surgical operation for his own daughter. In such a situation gynecologist may not be able to remain “functionally specific” or to have universalistic orientations.

In medical system, the gynecologists are supposed to make a clear line between his/her professional relationship and personal relationship with the patient. While making decisions relating to science, he/she is supposed to be neutral. The considerations to the wishes and desires of the patients should remain the secondary to his/her professional ethics [6].

While performing professional duties gynecologists tackle various situations which are potentially sensitive and excessively intimate. In such situations, gynecologists are supposed to restrict himself/herself strictly with his/her professional activity and must not go beyond that. The gynecologists must separate the context of professional practice from other contexts. That means he/she should not mix his/her professional role with personal life. If a male gynecologist asks his female patient to get undressed so that he could make physical examination. Such orders of gynecologists are largely obeyed without asking the justification or much questioning [7].

The guidance cooperation model usually underlines the gynecologists-patient relationship in the relatively less emergency. This type of relationship usually emerges in the acute type of relationship especially those of an infection type [7]. The model is particularly relevant for the developing countries whereas there are frequently infectious and other poor hygiene and food related disease are treated. In such cases the cooperation of the patient is needed. The patient is expected to obey, follow orders, comply with medical treatment prescribed by the gynecologists [8].

Mutual participation is the most difficult type of relationship because both gynecologists and patient are required to understand the needs of each other [8]. This collaborative approach is particularly vital in managing chronic conditions, where patients primarily follow treatment plans independently, with periodic guidance from their gynecologists [7]. Effective communication serves as the cornerstone of a strong doctor-patient relationship, directly influencing treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction [9].

However, many gynecologists lack specialized communication skills needed to engage effectively with young female patients and their parents. Developing such competencies – which help build trust and comfort, especially during initial consultations – often requires years of clinical experience.

Seventy seven percent females prefer a female gynecologist [10]. Many gynecologists in Pakistan prefer establishing private clinics or hospitals, as the

private sector offers significantly higher financial rewards compared to government employment [11]. This has led to a dual-practice trend, where gynecologists often work in government hospitals during the day and private clinics in the evening. In today's material-driven society, financial incentives have become a dominant influence, even in healthcare. This monetary focus has visibly altered doctor-patient dynamics, with gynecologists frequently displaying preferential treatment toward affluent or influential patients while adopting a more transactional approach with others. Such profit-oriented practices have eroded the traditional patient-doctor relationship, reducing it to a service-provider model where empathy is often secondary to financial gain [12].

Pakistan's patriarchal social structure further complicates these dynamics, particularly in gynecological care. Significant gender barriers exist between male gynecologists and female patients, with many women feeling uncomfortable discussing sensitive health issues with male practitioners. This communication gap highlights the need for more female gynaecologists, as women patients generally feel more at ease with practitioners of their own gender [13].

Recent studies have extensively examined the evolving role of female gynaecologists and their distinct approach to patient care. The increasing presence of women in this specialty – now entering the field by choice rather than necessity – has significantly impacted healthcare dynamics. As research indicates [14], scholarly work has documented both the historical exclusion of women from medical practice and the transformative effect of growing numbers of female gynaecologists on therapeutic relationships.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology describes the whole process of research which is based on the research topic, research question and preceding literature review. Qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world in which researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people brings to them [15]. According to [16] Universe is “any set of individuals or objectives having common observable characteristics”. The collection of all possible observations relevant to some characteristics of interest is called a population or Universe.

### **In-Depth Interviews & Thematic Analysis**

In-depth interviews were conducted using an open-ended, thematic approach rather than predetermined questions. This qualitative method proves particularly effective for investigating sensitive social issues, as it allows participants to freely share personal narratives, lived experiences, and subjective perspectives. As an exploratory research tool, in-depth interviews provide rich, detailed insights by examining a select group of individuals' interpretations of various phenomena and their contextual understanding of current situations [17]. The study employed thematic analysis as its qualitative examination framework. This analytical process involved.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section describes the whole information and background situation of gynecologist-patient relationship.

### Case Study 1: Safia

Safia was educated and her qualification was M.A English literature. She was a teacher by profession. She and her husband earn money. The income was more than 60,000. She was married and living in a nuclear family. In her home there were 5 members.

Mostly gynecologist check good, but some gynecologists are rude. Safia's doctor was cooperative with her. Gynecologists should have cooperative behavior with their patients so that patients can be satisfied with the way of treatment. She interacted freely and in frank way with her gynecologist. Safia feels comfortable with female gynecologists because she can easily ask questions from lady doctor and feel shy while talking to male gynecologists. Less interaction leads to unsatisfaction in the treatment because in less interaction patients do not tell their problems to gynecologists and in this way, they can have communication gap.

If gynecologists have nice attitude towards their patients it helps patient to cure their problem and be satisfied with their doctor and it is reciprocal relationship that patient should cooperate with their gynecologists, then the gynecologists also cooperate with their patients. When gynecologists do not guide proper to their client then it result in miscarriages. In public hospitals, gynecologists treat their patients as a burden because there are a lot of patients coming to them and they feel tired and influence the way of treatment and patients are not being proper checked and on the other hand in private hospitals gynecologists deal very nicely and calmly to the patients. She had 2 deliveries in government hospitals and one delivery in the private hospital. So, she concluded that gynecologists of private hospitals treat satisfactory as compared to government hospitals.

### Case Study 2: Saima

Saima has done her M.phil recently. She was a housewife. Her husband and her brother-in-law were the earners of the family. The income is approximately 75,000. She was married and lived in joint family. There were 8 members in her family. Sometimes gynecologist treat very well, she listens and understands the problem and guides them in a better way. To somehow, they are cooperative and once she had experience that when she went to gynecologist, she was continuously using cell phone which was bothering Saima. A patient needs more interaction with their gynecologists regarding their health issues because interaction leads to communication which helps in understanding. Saima was more comfortable with female gynecologist because she cannot openly tell problems to male gynecologist and as well as she feels hesitation while going to male gynecologist. She personally thinks that only western culture has trend to go to male gynecologist. She feels shy while going to male gynecologist. Less interaction leads to miscarriages because they do not give time properly. And one more thing that patients need attention which gynecologist fails to provide full attention towards patients.

Gynecologist attitude sometimes affect negatively and sometimes affect positively because in some cases they provide bless care to their patients because of their attitude. Gynecologists' irresponsible and uncooperative behavior leads to communication gap and a patient become unsatisfied and do not understand and as well as patients want to share their problems but cannot convey it properly.

### **Case Study 3: Uroosa**

Uroosa has done her master's program in Anthropology and teaches at college level. She and her husband both earn money and their income is approximately 120,000. She was married and living in a nuclear family with 4 members.

Uroosa went for treatment in private hospital. Gynecologists of public hospitals do not treat well but in private hospitals gynecologist treat very well and guide her in a friendly manner. Sometimes, if gynecologists are under stress that will affect the way of treatment. And they start rude behavior and they start using harsh words towards patients. Uroosa was comfortable with male gynecologists because according to her, males are more experienced and are more specialized and males are emotionally strong. Less interaction with patients leads to unsatisfaction in treatment. There should be friendly environment between patient and the doctor. If they both are friendly with each other patients can share all problems without hesitation.

#### **1. Thematic Analysis**

The researcher had discussed the whole background of the participants and also narrated their life experiences in their own words in the form of narration and themes. Now this will be going to discuss the existing and emerging themes of the current study to support their phenomenon of gynecologist-patient relationship.

##### **a. Attitude of Patient's Family and Gynecologists Towards Pregnancy**

The attitude of husband, family and gynecologists plays an important role because women alone are incomplete and she also needs encouragement and motivation by husband, gynecologist and as well as from family also.

##### **b. Attitude of Patient's Family Towards Pregnancy**

There are 75% of women whose husbands are cooperated and are very much concerned about their wives. The attitudes of some husbands are strict towards their wives because they are lazy and reluctant to go to their gynecologist on time.

**According to One of the Respondents, Now, I have Quoted the Words of Resondent to Explain how her Husband and her Family were Cooperative:**

“ Jab ma athara saal kit hi tou phala miscarriage hoa tha tou ma bohat disheart aor disappoint hoi thi aor mere mery shohar mujhy dekh k preshan rehty thy phir jb hum gynecologist ky pas gye aor usny bohat encourage aor motivate kia mujhy aour mere shohar kot tou mery shohar ny har mumkin kosish ki keh ma normal ho sakon aor pehly se ziada mere kiyal kia” (Sadia, 28 Nov, 2016).

English translation of the Verbatim of the Participant;

“When I was at the age of 18, I had my first miscarriage and I was very much disappointed and dishearten that when my husband used to see me, he also gets very worried. Then we went to a gynecologist, she motivates and encourages me and as well as my husband. He was much more concerned about me as before and he tries his level best to normal me and cooperates with me.”

A miscarriage, medically known as spontaneous abortion, refers to the natural loss of a pregnancy before the 24th week of gestation [18]. In miscarriage there may be intense feelings of loss and grief, possibly because of the harsh contrast of events: one day the couple is fulfilling a dream and expectation, the next day the child is gone [19]. This may be particularly true for those who are losing their first child [20]. The couple may also feel anxiety, anger, and frustration as they wonder about the possibilities for future children. The intensity of a woman's feelings may be even greater because she is weakened and physically weak [20]. One long-term effect may be isolation from friends and relatives because miscarriage is a mystery, most friends and relatives do not know what to say or how to react.

### **c. Attitude of Gynecologist Towards Pregnancy**

Some of the gynecologists' attitude is rude and some of the gynecologist's attitude is polite, responsible and cooperative towards their patients during pregnancy. Gynecologists behavior impacts a lot on patient's health and feelings. **Hina's Words are Quoted here to Explain that her Gynecologist was Rude, and she was not Cooperating with her:**

"Ap pehli aurat ni hein jis ka yah bacha ho raha hai; ap jaisi aour auraton ka bhi yahi haal hota hai." (Hina, 11 Nov, 2016).

English translation of the Verbatim of the Respondent;

"You are not the only one who is bearing a child this situation is faces by many women."

It seems that 25% of the women in the childbearing age must deal with depressive episodes [22]. This suggests that fertile women, who suffer from depressions, are likely to use antidepressants while getting pregnant. Unsupervised reduction or rapidly stopping the use of antidepressants can increase the risk of maternal depression decline. However, continuing the use may negatively influence the development of the baby [23]. Since 2012, the policy of the Dutch Association for Obstetrics and Gynecology (NVOG) is in general to continue using antidepressants, depending on severity of the depression. However, nearly 50% of the pregnant women stop using pharmacotherapy to prevent decline. The choice between antidepressants is influenced by the preferences and attitudes of pregnant women and their health professionals, like midwives and gynecologists. Attitudes are mental representations, which are shaped by experience and affect the behavior [24]. Health professionals will better understand the preferences of pregnant women and take them more seriously, which may lead to an increase of engagement in pregnant women towards the chosen treatment [25].

### **d. Patient's Preference for Gender of Doctors Regarding Checkup**

According to some patients they don't mind that whether male or female doctor treat them, the only one thing that they want is that the doctor should relieve them from the pain and treatment should be satisfactory. Mostly patients are comfortable with female gynecologist rather than male gynecologist because they can tell each and everything in detail to female gynecologists. There are 95% patients who prefer female gynecologists rather than male gynecologists, first because of culture and religious barriers. They think that it is western culture and patients do not mind whether they are being treated by male gynecologist or

female gynecologist. Last but not the least; patients give preference to the female gynecologists because patients feel shy and hesitation while going to male gynecologists. Females cannot share their condition and cannot tell their problems frankly to the male gynecologists. In delivery cases, while checkup they are so many personal things like showing the body parts that feels awkward that one is showing it to the males. So, patients prefer female gynecologist. But, other 5% patients prefer male gynecologists rather than female gynecologist because according to them males are emotionally strong as compare to females and males are more professional, specialized and experienced because they pursue their profession and make up their careers but on the other hand females are dependent on their husbands and as well as family that whether they allow them to continue their profession or not. In most of the profession of ultrasounds there are males and females are very rare so here are no options for the patients to divert their attention.

**Sadia Shared her Experience that why she Prefers Female Gynecologist:**

“We can share everything with female gynecologist without any shyness and hesitation and can openly discuss our problems regarding health issues. When male gynecologist touches our body and sees our any body part it does not seems nice and one more thing that’s why I prefer female gynecologist is that because of religious and cultural barriers.” (Sadia, 2 Dec 2016).

**Uroosa Told about why she Prefers Male Gynecologist Rather than Female Gynecologist:**

“I was comfortable with male gynecologist because males are more experienced and are more specialized and male are more emotionally strong.” (Uroosa, 5 Dec 2016).

**e. Effects of Gynecologists’ Attitude Towards Pregnant Women**

A predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action and responses to challenges, incentives and rewards.

**f. Effect of Negative Attitude Towards Pregnant Female**

Gynecologist plays an important role in the delivery of a patient. Some gynecologists are rude and aggressive which leads to negative effect on pregnancy. If the attitude of gynecologists is not cooperative and irresponsible towards patient, then it not only affects patient’s health but also baby’s health that may leads to miscarriages and unsatisfaction among patients. Some gynecologists treat their patients as burden and check their client quickly so that to make more money. Some patients take tough decisions like to change their gynecologists because they do not give them proper time and are unsatisfied with the way of treatment.

**g. Positive Effect on Pregnancy**

According to the patients, some gynecologists treat their patients calmly and are very much cooperative, polite and responsible towards their patients. Some doctors encourage and as well as also motivates their client who has gone through some mishap and faced problems regarding miscarriages. Whether less interaction with gynecologists but cooperative or satisfactory checkup leads them to the comfort zone. If gynecologists’ attitude is cooperative, patients feel comfortable and think that they are in safe hands.

#### **h. Patients Satisfaction Toward Gynecologists**

If gynecologist is not cooperative and attitude is irresponsible which bother the patient, then it leads to dissatisfaction in the treatment and it force patient to change their gynecologist because they are not comfortable with the previous gynecologist. And if gynecologist mishandle the delivery case then patients becomes worried and they prefer to switch their gynecologist and move to another doctor. Mostly gynecologist gives their patients 10 to 20 minutes for the treatment.

##### **Saima Said that;**

“Jab mein gynecologist ky pass gai apny checkup krwany tou wo musalsal apny mobile pa lagi hoi thi aor wo games khail rhi thi. Mujhy bohat bura feel hoa aor wo harkat mujhy preshan kr rhi thi asy lag rha tha keh doctor mere baat nai sun rahi aour mujhy for granted ly rahi hai. Agar aesa koi doctor kry ga apny marezzon k saath tou patient zaihri si baat hai unsatisfy ho ga.” (Saima, 23 Dec 2016).

##### **English Translation of this Conversation!**

“When I went to the gynecologist for my checkup, she was continuously using cellphone and playing games. I was feeling very bad and she was bothering me as well. It seems like she is not interested in me and not listening me and taking me for granted. If any gynecologist does like this to any patient, then of course the patient will be unsatisfied with her gynecologist’s way of treatment.”

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This investigation examines the dynamics between gynecologists and their patients through a case study analysis of healthcare facilities in Pakistan's twin cities. The study employs qualitative research methods to explore this professional relationship in depth. All the analysis of data and conclusions are based on the facts and findings. Gynecologist and patient play an important. The gynecologist- patient relationship is central to the practice of healthcare and is essential for the delivery of high-quality health care in the diagnosis and treatment. The better the relationship in terms of mutual respect, knowledge, trust, shared values and perspectives about disease and life, and time available, the better will be the amount and quality of information about the patient's case. The study reveals significant challenges in gynaecological care due to physician shortages. Patients often endure prolonged wait times because of Insufficient numbers of practicing gynaecologists, Irregular attendance by some practitioners at public facilities. dual-practice physicians dividing time between public and private institutions

The researcher has concluded that there are 75% of women whose husbands are cooperative and understandable while they are facing problems and having health issues. There is some gynecologist whose attitude and behavior are rude.

##### **FURTHER STUDY**

This research is still delayed, so it is necessary to conduct further research on the topic of Gynecologist-Patient Relationship: A Sociological Investigation of Hospitals in Twin Cities of Pakistan to improve this research and add insight for readers

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Gynecologists should be enough experienced so that they able to handle delivery cases with care. Camera needed to be installed in order to keep a constant eye on gynecologists that how their behavior and attitude is towards patients. The government must implement policies to regulate private gynecological practices by capping consultation fees and medication costs while recruiting more gynecologists in public hospitals to serve low-income patients.

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