



Gender *Payn* Gap Myth or Painful Truth?

Fariba Mohtashami, MD, FRCSC
University of British Columbia
Head, UBC Division of General OBGYN
Head, St. Paul's Hospital Department of OBGYN,
Vancouver, Canada

Objectives

- Apply the lessons of history to Women's Health
- Review the Gender Bias in medicine
- Discuss Pain control in gynecological procedures

The background of the image is a photograph of shattered glass. The glass is broken into many sharp, jagged pieces that are suspended in the air, creating a web-like pattern. The background is a clear blue sky with a bright, glowing sun in the upper center, which creates a lens flare effect. The overall mood is one of fragility and pain.

Disclosure

**My pain is dismissed
because of my gender**

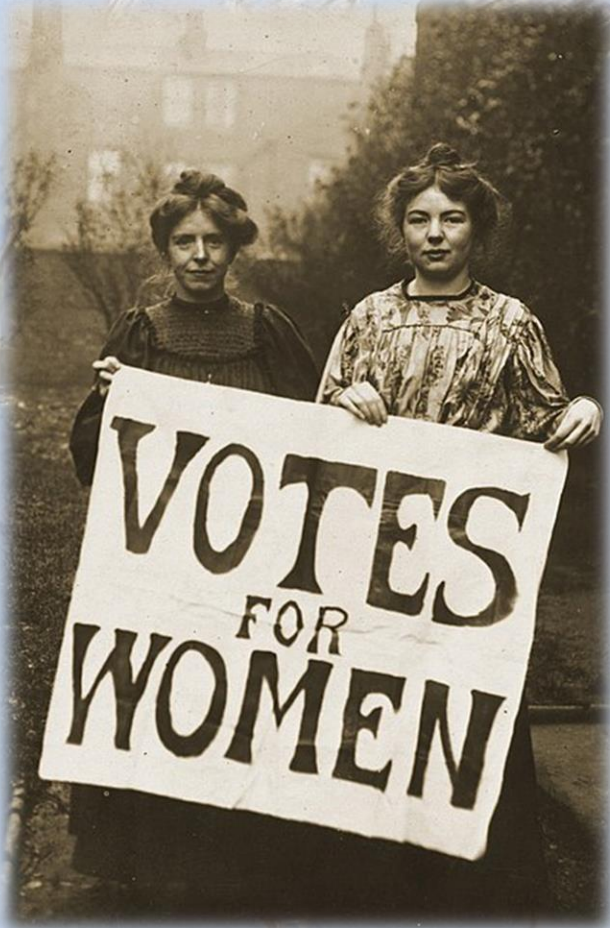
Global Sexism



dreamstime.



Global Sexism



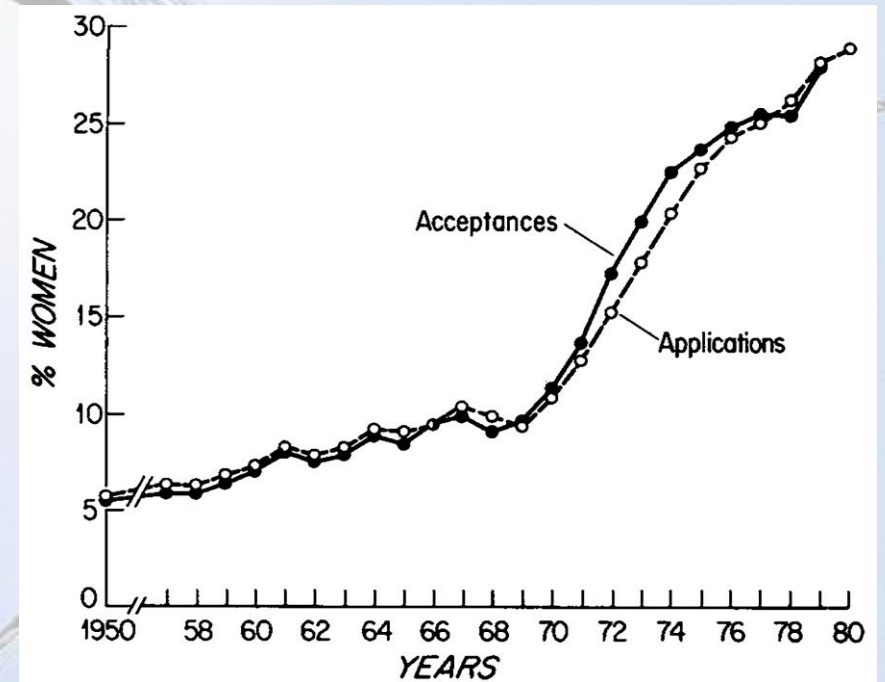
Canada 1922

Why I
Just Got My
First
Credit Card!



The U.S. 1974

Women in Medicine



The gender gap in North American medical schools closed only in **2004**

Women in Surgery

Surgical specialists

68%



32%



Canada 2020

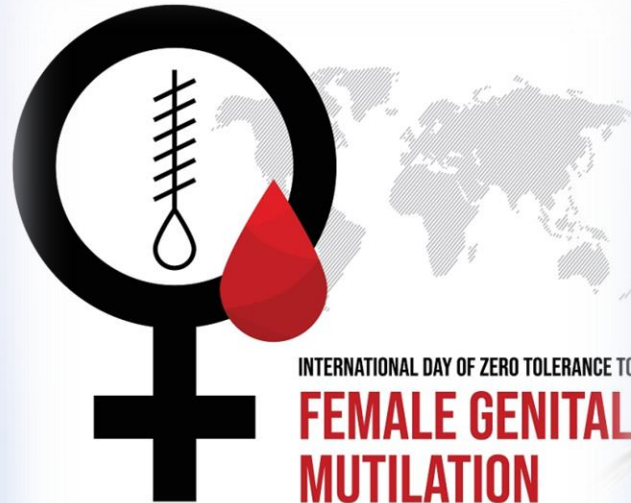
Surgery remains a male dominated profession

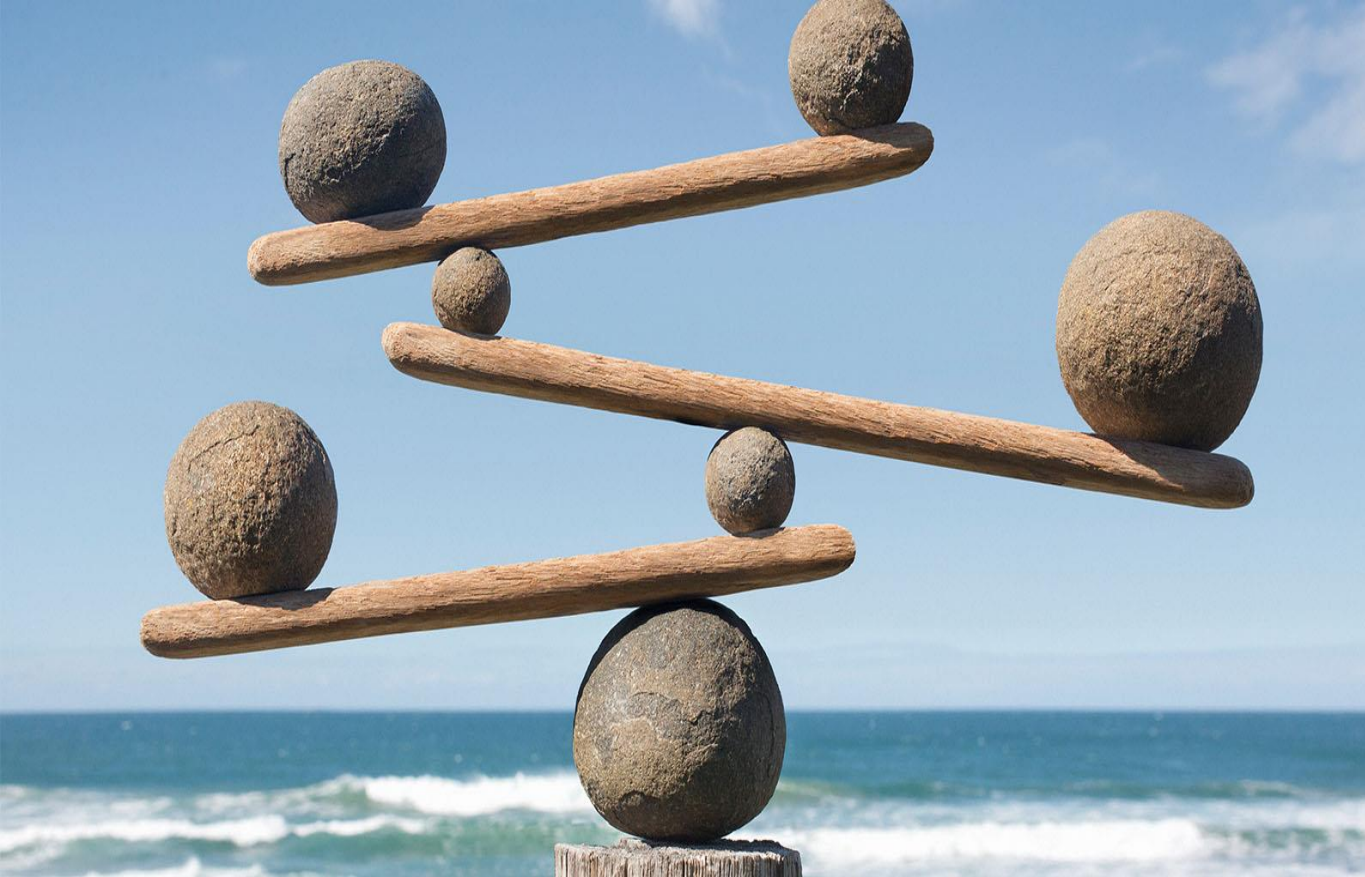
Gender-based Violence- Global Pandemic



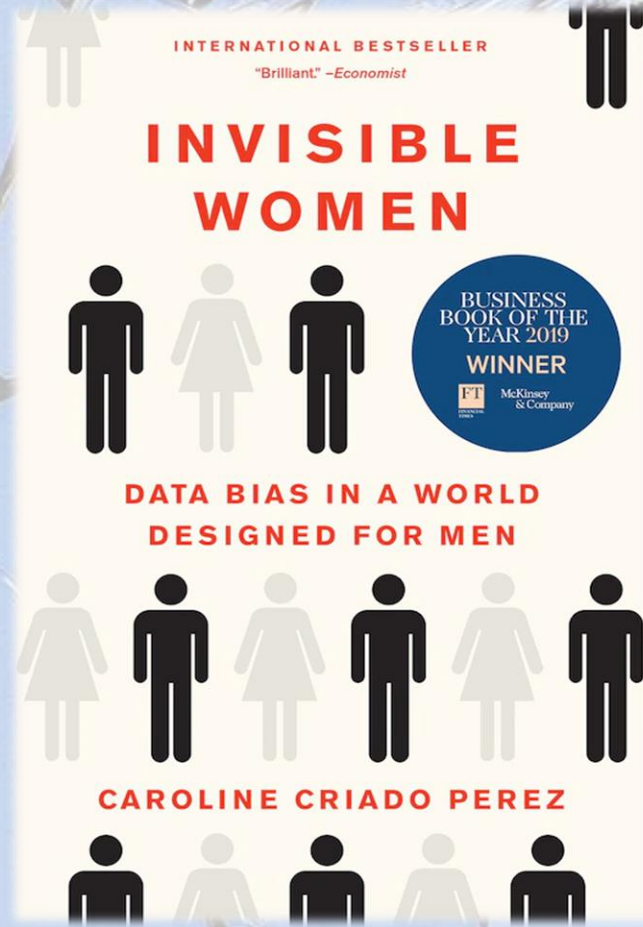
1 in 4 girls

experience child sexual abuse
before turning 18 years old.





Gender Data Gap

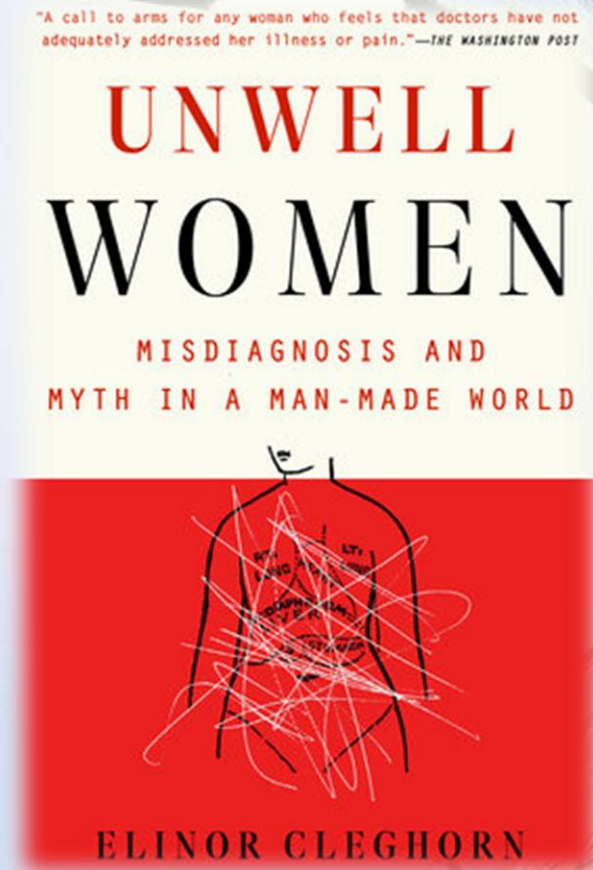


Male-Unless-Otherwise-Indicated



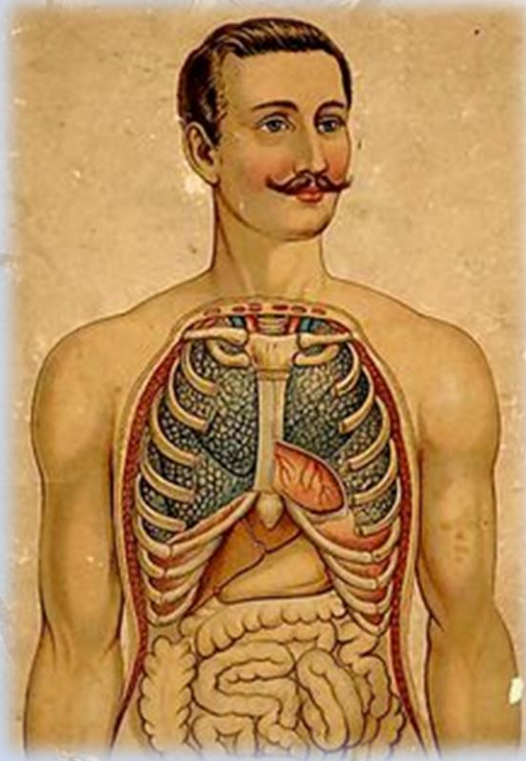
***Female crash-test dummies
used since 2011***

Medicine for Women



Medical system systematically discriminates against women

Medicine for Women



75% of neutral body
parts images



Menstruation → Taboo
Pudendal → Shame

Medicine for Women

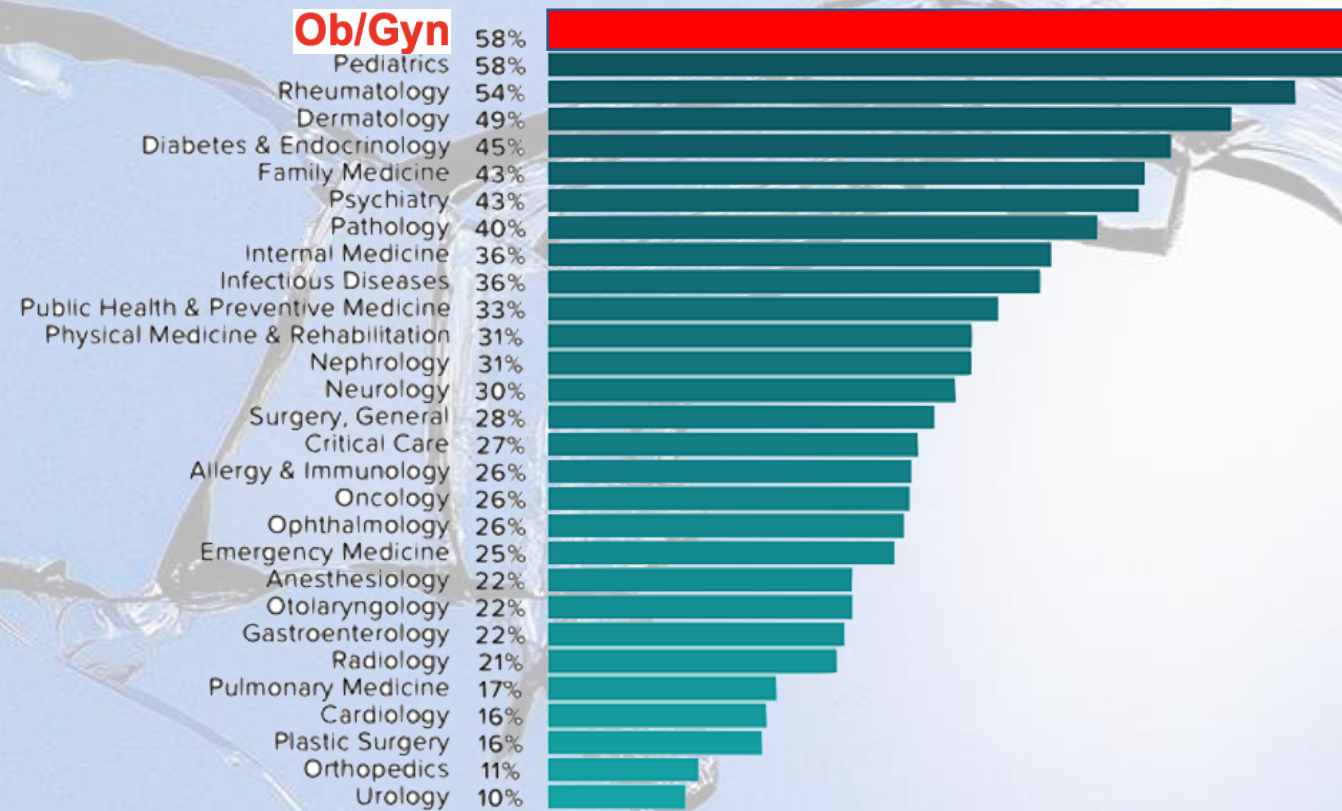
- Women were excluded from clinical trials until 1993
- Drug side effects and OD- more common
- Chemotherapy agents and BP medications- less effective



***Women are not just smaller men
They have different physiology and metabolism***

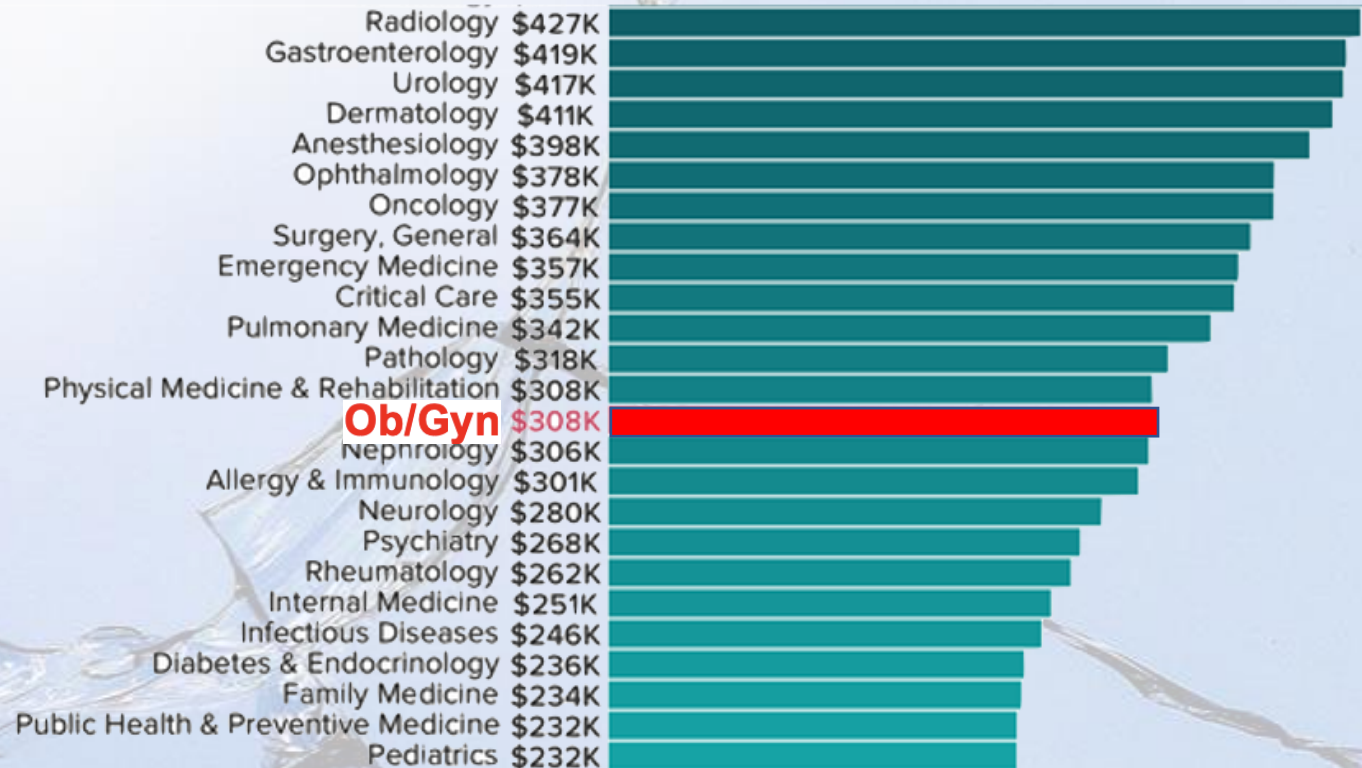
Percentage of Female Physicians by Specialty

OBGYN is the first majority women surgical specialty



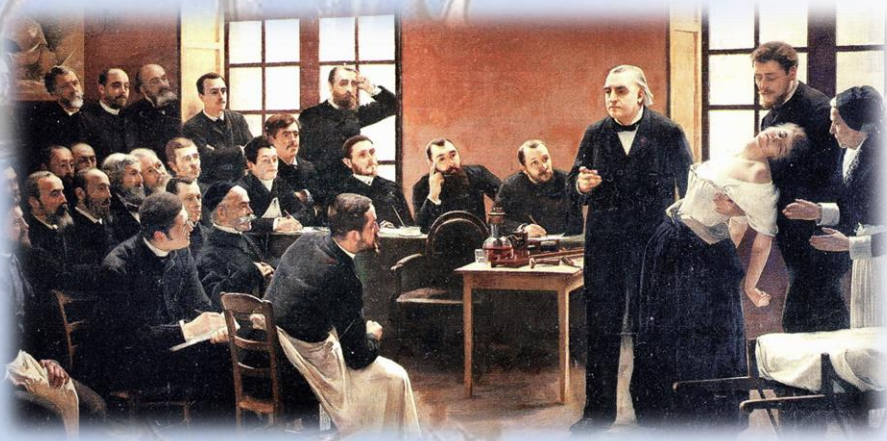
OBGYN is the lowest paid of the procedural specialties

How Much Do OB/GYNS Earn?



Medicine for Women

Women's pain is downplayed



***The Wandering Wombs of
Hysterical Women***



***Women are Misunderstood,
Misdiagnosed, and Mistreated***

Surgical Sexism

Structural Bias in Reimbursement of Surgery for Women in Canada

Michael Chaikof, MD¹, Geoffrey W. Cundiff, MD², Fariba Mohtashami, MD², Alexi Millman, MD³, Maryse Larouche, MD⁴, Marianne Pierce, MD⁵, Erin A Brennand, MD⁶, and Colleen McDermott, MD¹

Surgeons operating on women were reimbursed at significantly lower rates **(28.1% +/- 11.1)**

Surgical Sexism

Access to Hospital Resources

OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY

The Twisted Truth: Decision-to-Incision Time for Ovarian vs Testicular Torsion

Boudreaux, Taylor M. BS; Schachter, Aubrey MS, BS; Guice, Kelsie BS; Gwan, Anwei BS; Boudreaux, Taylor L. BS;



153 min

P=0.003



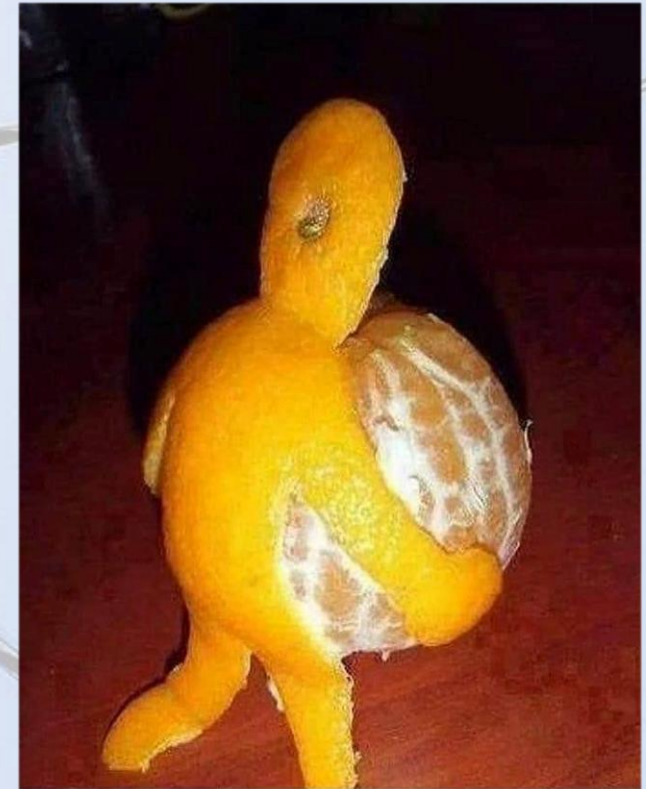
80 min

The biggest delay was when the surgeon and patient were both women

Is Pregnancy “Physiologic”?



>30% mortality



Sometimes you just
have to pick up
yourself & carry on

Gender Disparity in Analgesic Treatment of Emergency Department Patients with Acute Abdominal Pain

Esther H. Chen, MD, Frances S. Shofer, PhD, Anthony J. Dean, MD, Judd E. Hollander, MD, William G. Baxt, MD, Jennifer L. Robey, RN, Keara L. Sease, MaEd, Angela M. Mills, MD

Sex and Race Differences in the Evaluation and Treatment of Young Adults Presenting to the Emergency Department With Chest Pain

Darcy Banco ¹, Jerway Chang ¹, Nina Talmor ¹, Priya Wadhera ², Amrita Mukhopadhyay ³, Xinlin Lu ⁴, Siyuan Dong ⁴, Yukun Lu ⁴, Rebecca A Betensky ⁵, Saul Blecker ^{1 5}, Basmah Safdar ⁶, Harmony R Reynolds ⁷

Gender Stereotypes



Brilliance Bias

“Draw a scientist”

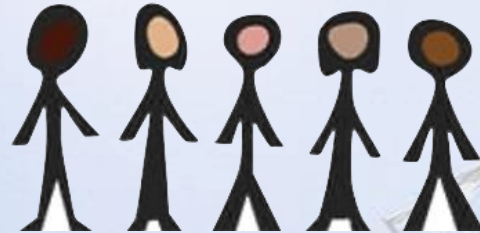


“Game for really, really smart kids”



Do we teach little girls that brilliance does not belong to them?

Gender Stereotypes Kill Women's Self-Confidence



Women tend to lowball their abilities, shrug off praise, and discount positive feedback

Gender Stereotypes Kill Men



Suicide & Drug OD



90% of military deaths

Gender Stereotypes at Workplace

- Women receive harsher punishments
 - Financial services – More likely to be fired, less likely to find new employment
 - Surgery – Less likely to receive referrals from same physician
 - Education- College students rate female professors poorly



Male professors are routinely considered more knowledgeable, and innately talented

Gender Stereotypes in Surgery

Stereotypes about surgeon warmth and competence: The role of surgeon gender

[Claire E. Ashton-James](#), Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology,

Female surgeons received more warmth and less competence ratings



Competence in female surgeons conflicts with gender roles

Status Leveling

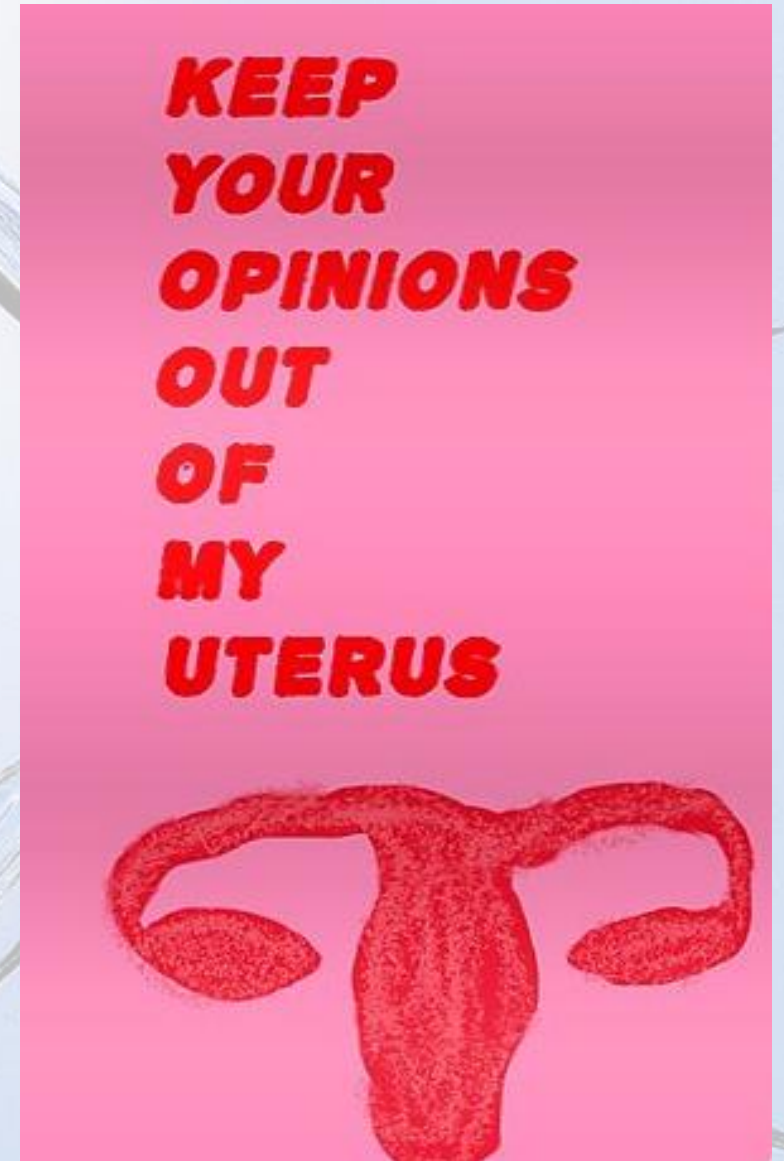
- Is a new concept published in Aug 2021
- High-status women in male-dominated environments produce a backlash and social disapproval from lower-status women
- Unique to female surgeon – female nurse



Nurses show less respect to female surgeons than male surgeons

OBGYN is Unique

- The female pelvic organs are the center of attention in
 - Religion
 - Politics
 - Economy



Sexism in OBGYN



Gynecology lags behind

Use of the levonorgestrel releasing-intrauterine system in nulliparous women – a non-interventional study in Sweden

Lena Marions [✉](#), Lena Lökvist, Annika Taube, Monica Johansson, Håkan Dalvik & Inger Øverlie

Pages 126-134 | Published online: 21 Mar 2011



Midwives:

- Easy insertion 72%

Patients:

- Painless 9%
- Moderately painful 72%
- Severely painful 17%



What Can We Do?

We are the ones we've
been waiting for



What Can We Do?

Question the Status Quo

What Can We Do?

- Encourage gender balance in the specialty



What Can We Do?

- Advocate equitable pay and access to resources for Gynecology



If trends continue, it will take 164 years to close Canada's gender pay gap

What Can We Do?

- Intentional Mentorship and Sponsorship



