

Short note to present experience of implementing gender in medical education project in Maharashtra

CEHAT is a research centre of Anusandhan trust and it works on issues affecting health of marginalised communities since 1994. We seek to present learnings based on the implementation of a project Gender in medical education at the AMCHSS conference to be held on 5 and 6 January 2017 by way of a panel presentation.

The conference theme focuses on “recent trends in public health and practice “and looks at how the discourse on infectious diseases, sexual and reproductive health and use of technologies has evolved in the context of public health. The GME project of Maharashtra implemented by CEHAT seeks to present learning on how gender has been integrated in the teaching of specific concepts such as infectious diseases and how rights based approach has been integrated in the teaching of reproductive and sexual health for undergraduate MBBS students. Conflate

Currently the gender lens in teaching of MBBS students is missing. A review of medical text books have shown that many textbooks across disciplines such as gynaecology and obstetrics, community medicine , medicine, psychiatry and forensic medical science carry a lot of biases against women. The medical textbooks thus demonstrate a failure to incorporate psychological, cultural, and social factors relevant to women’s health outcomes. At the level of health care delivery, Health care providers (HCPs) are often found assigning complaints from women, like nausea, more to psychogenic causes, which indicate bias against women. Additionally factors that affect susceptibility to a disease, timely access to health care services, treatment compliance/default and prognosis differ for men and women based on gender roles they play. A lot of conflation between MTP and PCPNDT act is observed among health care providers, because of which women are denied second trimester abortions, considering them as sex selective, hence abortion need of many vulnerable women is compromised. But these aspects are not given required importance. It is therefore crucial that medicine becomes more gender sensitive and this requires educating medical practitioners on gender issues and how gender interacts with other determinants of health. One such effort has been made by the state of Maharashtra University of health sciences in collaboration with department of medical education and research and CEHAT.

The panel presentation would seek to present experiences of medical educators who have amended the teaching methodology and integrated gender concerns in teaching specific topics such as infectious diseases and how they have taught medical students that if they become gender aware it can assist them in recognizing risk factors, responses to interventions, experience of social issues, prevalence and manifestations of the illness and biases that affect their care. Similarly educators teaching gynaecology and obstetrics to medical students have integrated an understanding on different gender identities such as intersex and transgender people and recognising their sexual and reproductive health concerns.

About GME in Maharashtra: The Gender in medical education project of CEHAT incorporates learning of two decades of efforts related to engaging the health sector on creating a sensitive response to gender based violence and the past work of AMCHSS. The current GME project of CEHAT, with the support of Directorate of Medical Education and Research (DMER), Maharashtra University of Health Sciences (MUHS) and UNFPA, is being implemented in seven medical colleges of Maharashtra. Specifically, the project seeks to achieve gender sensitization and awareness on public health issues such as sex selection, abortion and violence against women by integrating perspectives in the MBBS curriculum. The uniqueness of this project is that most gender in medical education programs world over follow a method of including additional lectures on gender. This initiative makes effort to integrate gender in all disciplines and across five years in all the lecture topics ensuring retention of knowledge among medical students throughout the MBBS course.

Key outputs of the project:

1. A pool of 20 mid level to senior medical educators trained as trainers on the issue of gender integration in medical education. They have already carried out seminars and workshops in their medical colleges on the issue of gender integration in medical curriculum.
2. 3 medical colleges have already implemented gender integrated curricula in community medicine and gyanecology for two semesters

3. Designed gender integrated medical curriculum across five disciplines for all five years of MBBS and advocating for policy inclusion of modules in MBBS curriculum

We would like to propose a panel discussion with three key speakers from different medical colleges of Maharashtra to present their experience of integrating gender in medical education across different disciplines.

The panel would comprise of

Dr Pravin Shingare : Head of the Directorate of medical education and research

Dr Srinivas Gaddappa : Professor Gynaecology and obstetrics

Dr Priya Prabhu : Associate Professor Community medicine

Dr Sonali Deshpande : Associate Professor Gynaecology

1 CEHAT delegate

1 UNFPA senior programme officer