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The health sector

European and Italian legislation aim to guarantee gender equality in the health services. However, some practices are considered discriminatory towards women, both as patients and as workers.¹⁻²

These practices concern in particular the offer of services necessarily reserved for women, such as reproductive care, prenatal diagnoses, contraceptive methods and abortion, refusal to provide drugs or healthcare services because contrary to religious belief.

In the workplace, women doctors complain discrimination, professional and economic dissatisfaction and difficulties in accessing leadership positions.

In Europe, Italian women doctors are among those who have greater difficulties.

The percentage of female doctors is growing, but Italy is still below the European average (only 40% in 2018).³

However, not many, but some measures have been taken to decrease the gender gap in health. For instance, a reform of the abortion law, wanted by the Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza, allows women to have a medical abortion, less invasive than surgical methods, not only up to the fourth week, but up to the ninth ⁴. But this is not enough! There are many other problems, like the opposing views on the practice of the surrogation pregnancy (for instance, the Italian Government is against this choice⁵), or the big inequalities in the leadership of the health sector.⁶

It's difficult to quote a specific case of gender discrimination in the health sector, because the problem concerns many women who fight everyday to assert their rights against all discrimination.

Hopefully, social media plays an important role to promote gender equalities in the health field. They spread images and videos that encourage the idea of equality, explaining and normalizing this important right, in particular among teenagers.⁷

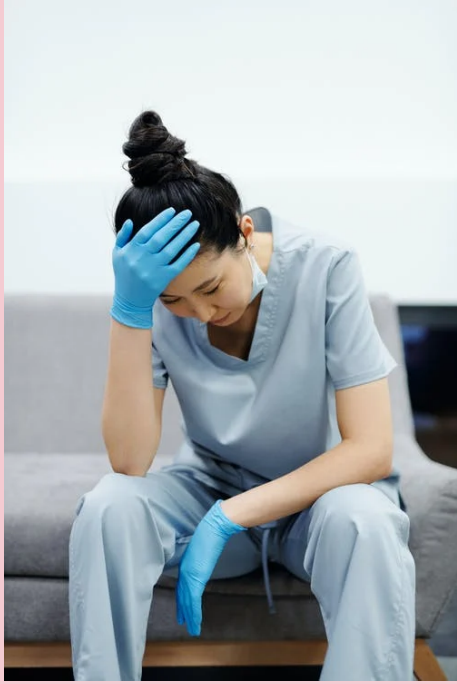
Furthermore, there are events and petitions, such as "The End gender inequality in clinical pharmacy", promoted by the organization "Women in pharmacy", that fight against this issue, not only on the international day of action for women's health, but also during the whole year.⁸⁻⁹

Some significant images:



In Italy the percentage of female doctors is very low (only 40% in 2018).

Actually, the Italian ones are among the most dissatisfied female doctors in Europe, due to the great discrimination and above all economic inequalities.³



Many Italian women doctors work very hard everyday in order to help people in need, but their great commitment is not always recognized; there are few of them who have managed to access the highest positions in the health sector, often having to work harder than male colleagues.⁶



During the period of the Covid-19 virus pandemic, especially in the moment of greatest difficulty, the contribution of many Italian female doctors proved to be essential, not only in Italy, but also in foreign countries.



In Italy, women can ask for the termination of pregnancy for health, social, economic or family reasons. Since 1978 this intervention has been regulated by law 194/78.¹¹



In Italy, many women fight everyday in order to assert their rights against any discrimination. Among them there are also many female doctors who struggle to have equal rights as male colleagues: the same salary, the same recognition at work and the same possibility to access the highest positions in the health sector.¹⁰

Our sources:

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