

Joint pledge on ending sexism in medicine

Sexism should never be tolerated, whether from individuals or ingrained in the policies and structures medical students and doctors work within. All doctors and medical students should work in an environment free from discrimination where their gender plays no role in their career progression or how they are treated by colleagues and patients. The medical profession should celebrate diversity, making all doctors and medical students feel valued and included. Doctors and medical students must be given a safe environment to work in, where they are protected by their employers.

We want a medical profession that:

- Promotes a culture of respect for the competency and contribution of all doctors and medical students without assumptions or stereotypes based on gender.
- Addresses the negative impact of gender stereotypes in medical education and career pathways.
- Ensures equal opportunities for doctors and medical students to pursue and thrive in the career path of their choice, without gender stereotypes playing a limiting factor in their career.
- Has systems to raise concerns that are transparent, fair, and accountable, that doctors and medical students have confidence in.
- Takes targeted and evidence-based actions when addressing inequality. Recognising that women are more likely to experience sexism – while also acknowledging that other genders can be subject to disadvantage, for example, non-binary people being sexually harassed or men having less support to take parental leave due to gender stereotypes.

All actions we take to progress to a fairer medical profession must be intersectional to ensure we accurately reflect the experiences of all doctors and medical students, recognising that other characteristics such as a person's gender identity, ethnicity, disability, faith or sexual orientation will impact their experiences of sexism.

Goals

We believe that working in partnership towards these goals will help us in achieving this pledge. Some of these goals are specific to women, who disproportionately experience gender discrimination, this includes all doctors and medical students who identify as women.



Goals

1. Eliminate sexism from career progression opportunities.

Identify and address the structurally discriminatory policies that cause career progression to be different for men and women.

Maximise transparency and increase access, equality and equity in recruitment processes, training, examinations, and career and pay progression opportunities. This includes ensuring that any panels or decision-making bodies are representative of the workforce and population.

2. End sexual harassment in medicine.

Implement robust sexual harassment policies and codes of conduct that protect doctors and medical students from sexual harassment from colleagues and patients.

3. Ensure that there are multiple channels for reporting sexual harassment and sexism.

Formal and informal reporting channels must be well-known to doctors and medical students, with confidence that the process will not be detrimental on careers.

4. Promote the benefits of gender diversity in medicine.

Implement success measures and metrics to monitor and drive progress. Encourage people and organisations to address sexism and reward those who take action to improve gender diversity, for example, through education on the impact of sexism on recruitment, retention and wellbeing.

5. Guarantee safe and supportive environments for pregnant doctors and medical students.

All pregnant and breastfeeding doctors and medical students should have access to high-quality risk assessment and be encouraged to prioritise their health and safety at work. In the unfortunate event of a pregnancy loss, they should receive compassionate support from their workplace or university.

6. Remove the detrimental impact that having children and other caring responsibilities can have on career progression and work-life balance.

Equal access to development opportunities, career progression and fair working practices for doctors and medical students with caring responsibilities and those who work flexibly.

7. Actively challenge gender stereotypes in medicine.

End the assumption that certain specialties are more suited to certain doctors based on their gender and the wider stereotype that being a doctor is a male role.

8. Increase the visibility and voices of women.

Ensure that women are represented and recognised in decision-making, leadership teams and events. Particularly those from communities that are historically underrepresented.

9. Employees in more senior roles to recognise gender bias in the workplace.

Senior doctors to call out sexism and be responsible and accountable for addressing their own bias.

10. Support women's health.

Workplaces and medical schools should address the historic lack of recognition and support for women's health. Policies should be put in place to ensure that workplaces and medical schools are inclusive of women's health and wellbeing. For example, implementing policies on, menstruation, menopause, and domestic violence.

Signatories

Signatories at an organisational level will support the overarching aims in the pledge. The goals provide a focus that they can align their actions to achieve the pledge underneath.

Organisations can encourage individuals to sign-up to support the overarching aims in the pledge. Individuals can commit to behave in a way that supports achievement of the goals.

BMA

British Medical Association, BMA House,
Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP
bma.org.uk

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