Patient Attitudes Towards Gender Concordance In Urology Consultations

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Introduction

Urology has traditionally been a male-dominated surgical specialty, however the representation of women among urologists is increasing both in the United Kingdom[1] and worldwide [2].

Growing research suggests that clinical outcomes are enhanced when gender-concordance between patients and physicians exists [3].

To promote a healthcare system that is patient-centred and inclusive, it is crucial to understand patient preferences regarding the gender of their attending urologist.

Study objective

This cross-sectional survey study aimed to capture the views of urology outpatients regarding clinician-patient gender concordance at a district general hospital in the United Kingdom.

Methods

Adult patients attending urology outpatient clinics at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust between 10/05/2024 – 03/07/2024 were invited to participate in an anonymous survey.

Open questions and Likert attitudinal scales differentiated between patient's preferred clinician gender and level of acceptance of an alternative when discussing sensitive information or undergoing intimate examination.

Data were extracted from survey responses and collected contemporaneously.

Statistical analysis utilised chi-square testing.

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Participant demographics

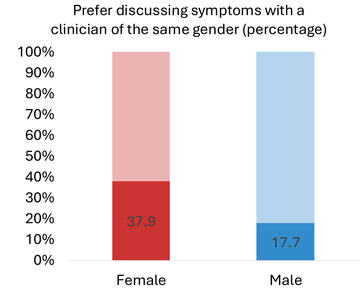
A total of 315 participants were included.

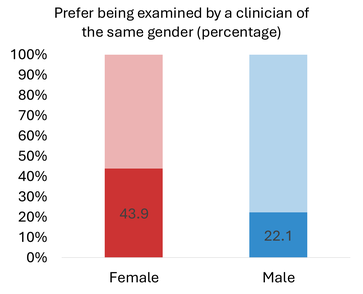
Table 1: Summary of patient characteristics

		Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	249 (79.0%)
	Female	66 (21.0%)
Age (years)	10-19	2 (0.6%)
	20-29	2 (0.6%)
	30-39	12 (3.8%)
	40-49	23 (7.3%)
	50-59	50 (15.9%)
	60-69	78 (24.8%)
	70-79	82 (26.0%)
	80-89	59 (18.7%)
	90-99	7 (2.2%)
Religion	Christianity	220 (69.8%)
	Islam	17 (5.4%)
	Hindu	1 (0.3%)
	Non-religion	67 (21.3%)
	Prefer not to answer	10 (3.2%)

Patient preference regarding clinician gender

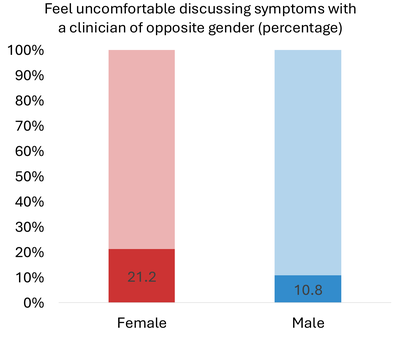
Female patients, in comparison with male patients, more commonly expressed a preference to discuss their care (37.9% vs 17.7% respectively, p<0.001) and be examined (43.9% vs 22.1% respectively, p<0.001) by a urologist of the same gender.

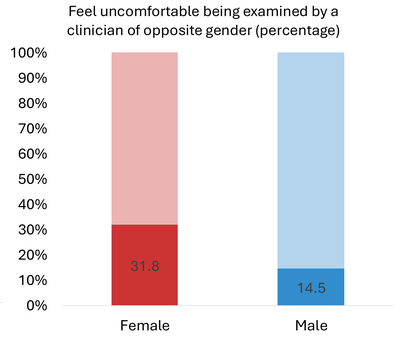




Patient comfort and clinician gender

Female patients were more likely to report feeling uncomfortable when discussing their symptoms (21.2% vs 10.8%, p=0.026) and undergoing examination (31.8% vs 14.5%, p=0.001) by a doctor of differing gender.





Free-text responses regarding clinician gender

"In a urology setting, I feel a person of the same gender as myself would have a better understanding of my symptoms."

"You should be able to request same sex doctors and chaperones on the day of appointment."

"Patients should be given a choice of the doctor's gender for appointments and procedures"

“It would depend to some extent on the doctors themselves and their manner. I would rather be seen by a doctor who is skilled rather than worry about their gender."

Conclusion

The majority of patients do not express a gender preference for their attending urologist; instead, they prioritize competence and skills.

However, as healthcare systems evolve towards greater patient-centeredness, it becomes increasingly important to acknowledge and address gender preferences where they arise.

The growing presence of female urologists may facilitate better accommodation of patients with specific gender preferences

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[3] Wallis CJD, Jerath A, Coburn N, et al. Association of Surgeon-Patient Sex Concordance With Postoperative Outcomes. JAMA Surg. 2022;157(2):146–156. doi:10.1001/jamasurg.2021.6339

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