Sexual Assault: Knowledge and Perception of Gynaecologists of Pakistan

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Objective:

The objective of this study was to assess knowledge and perception of Gynaecologists working in Tertiary Care Hospitals of Lahore, Pakistan who have been dealing with women with sexual assault.

Design:

This is a prospective cross sectional study and a questionnaire about knowledge and perception of sexual assault was used for assessment.

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Methods:

This prospective study was carried out in Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in three tertiary care hospitals of Lahore from May to June 2021 by filling a questionnaire, after verbal informed consent and obtained data was analyzed by SPSS 26.

Results:

166 doctors working at different levels answered a confidential and anonymous written questionnaire. Out of 166, 63.9% were 25-30years, 94% were females and 62.7% were married. 98.8% were Pakistanis while 72.3% belonged to urban areas of Pakistan. 53% participants had basic medical qualification (MBBS) and 41% were post graduate residents.50.6% strongly disagreed that women who wear certain types of clothing are responsible for their own rape.60.2% disagreed that rape cannot occur within marriage. 42.2% agreed upon victim not knowing the attacker. 47% disagreed that a woman can't be raped by someone she has a sexual relationship with. 30.1% strongly disagreed that a woman should feel guilty while 39.8% strongly agreed that a raped woman should do everything she can do to resist. Only 41.5% knew what to do when someone disclosed their rape. 65.1% felt uncomfortable listening to rape history of patients. 32.5% agreed that rape victim had alcohol prior to rape, 43.3% say rape victims become pregnant and 51.3% agreed that sexual violence is a very common cause of post-traumatic stress disorder while 45.8% said that rape victim may need HIV preventive measures.

Conclusion:

Laws against sexual violence and workplace harassment are in place in Pakistan but there is limited knowledge and awareness in Gynaecologists reporting sexual assault. Awareness of social rights and laws is necessary to improve diagnosis and management of this pressing problem, so this should be a part of basic medical curriculum in Pakistan.

Keywords: sexual assault, knowledge, perception, Gynaecologist.

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