

Debate

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE TEACHING-RESEARCH OF ANATOMY IN MEDICINE:
THE GENDER ISSUE

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE TEACHING-RESEARCH IN TURKEY

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When we look at the early historical information to question the educational status of women in Turkey, it is seen that primary and secondary schools for girls were first opened in 1858 in the Ottoman Empire. The school for girls to train teachers for these schools was opened in 1870, because only women could be teacher of women. However, until the days of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, women did not have the opportunity to acquire other professions by being educated. The daughters of some wealthy families had the opportunity to develop themselves by receiving special education and some female students went to Europe after graduating from high school and received higher education. Throughout the entire history of the Ottoman Empire, there were no women of science.

Since female students were not accepted to the Faculty of Medicine, some female students who wanted to become doctors received medical education in European countries, sometimes with the support of official institutions. One of these girls is Safiye Ali Hanım. After graduating from Würzburg University Faculty of Medicine in Germany, where she went as the daughter of an Ottoman pasha, she returned to her country as the first Turkish female doctor. Ms. Suat and Ms. Süeda also studied at the Geneva Medical Faculty, specialized in gynecology, and did not return to their homeland before the 1930s and worked in Geneva.

In the academic year of 1914-15, "İnas Darülfün", the first higher education institution for female students in the Ottoman Empire, was established. In the establishment of this university, both the increase in the demand for education of female students and the increase in the need for teachers in girls' high schools played a role. This three-year university was merged with Darülfünun, where male students studied in 1918-1919. Until then, 129 female students had studied at İnas Darülfünunu and 53 female students had graduated.

When we look the current situation in Turkey, we see that according to 2020-2021 Higher Education Statistics; there are 3,114,623 students at the bachelor level. Of these, 1,608,714 were registered as female students and 1,505,909 as male students. These statistics shows that the number of female students is higher than that of males. Specific statistics belonging to the Ankara University Faculty of

Medicine is similar to the percentage throughout the country; approximately 52% of our students are women and 48% men. Statistics of the last 5 years also show that women entering and graduating from the Faculty are always more than 50% of all students, albeit at very small varying rates. Likewise, proportion of women who hold regular teaching and/or research positions and who held positions as Main, Associate or Adjunct Professor in the Departments of Faculty of Medicine were between 55-60% in last 10 years, more than 90% being Doctors of Medicine. The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine between 2017-2021, Prof. Gülfem Elif Çelik, is a female who also served as Vice Dean between 2013-2017. The current Dean of Faculty of Medicine, Prof. Zehra Ayca and the Vice Dean Prof. Esra Erdemli are women; and statistics show that more than 70% of the Coordinators of Commissions who play critical role in planning and coordinating the education and research activities are women. In specific to Anatomical Sciences, the current head of the Turkish

Association of Anatomy and Clinical Anatomy, Prof. Piraye Kervancıoğlu is also a woman.

A demographic data on the number of women working as academic staff in 206 Universities (131 government, 75 private Universities) in Turkey is missing. I am not sure if this women dominant situation of our University is representative of what happens in the majority of universities in Turkey but I can easily say that the number of female administrators and representatives in academic and administrative fields in our university is higher than that of men.

References

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