

DebateTHE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE TEACHING-RESEARCH OF ANATOMY IN MEDICINE:
THE GENDER ISSUE**THE EXPERIENCE AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF BUENOS AIRES****Valeria Forlizzi***2nd Chair of Normal Anatomy, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Buenos Aires,
Buenos Aires City, Argentina*

The presence of women in anatomy teaching and research in health sciences careers has historically been limited due to gender barriers. Throughout history, women have been marginalized in most scientific fields, facing barriers in promotion and obtaining leadership positions due to gender stereotypes that perceive them as less competent than their male counterparts. The gender gap in women's representation has resulted in fewer women professors in the field.

However, in recent decades, there has been an increase in the presence and participation of women in human anatomy teaching and research, making their role increasingly important and relevant.

Women have contributed significantly to anatomical knowledge, leading to important advances in research and clinical practice. They have been able to provide a unique insight into the education and training of medical students, having made important discoveries and contribu-

tions to the discipline, given the possibility of offering a different and more balanced perspective and thus contributing to a more inclusive education.

Historically, the teaching of anatomy has been based on the study and description of male bodies with specific characteristics. By including a gender perspective, inequalities can be addressed and inclusion and access to education can be improved.

In Argentina, as elsewhere in the world, the role of women in anatomy teaching and research for health science careers has evolved over time. While historically there have been fewer women than men in this area, today the numbers are changing, and women now represent a significant proportion of students entering health science careers. In recent decades, they have been gaining ground in anatomy-related teaching and research.

In 2023, many women are working as anatomy professors in the different universities of the Argentine Republic. Many of them hold PhDs and have carried out important research in the morphological and pedagogical areas, giving a distinctive vision and approach to the teaching of the subject.

In 2017, 68.16% of the students who took anatomy at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Buenos Aires were women; in 2018 the percentage was 69.40%; in 2019 it corresponded to 70.80%; in 2020 (the first year of the pandemic) the numbers show that 71.99% were women and in the second year of the pandemic, 2021, the percentage of women taking the subject was 73.54%.

During the 2022 academic year, the number of students assigned to take anatomy was a total of 10402 students. 74.37% (7736) were female,

while 25.61% (2664) were male. Only two students did not declare their gender (0.019%). The percentage of female medical graduates in 2022 was 68% while the percentage of male graduates was 32% for the same period. When looking at the number of teaching assistants in the subject, the ratio increases to 75% female/25% male, and of the total number, 75% are still pursuing their undergraduate degree. Only 25% have completed their undergraduate training and started a specialization. The ratios (female/male) remain the same between undergraduate and postgraduate. Fifty per cent of anatomy teaching assistants work on an honorary basis. With regard to appointments, competitions for second-year teaching assistants are held every two years, so that, considering that the last ones were held in 2018 and 2019, the situation could only be normalized from the 2022 cycle onwards. Now, only 12.5% of the graduates appointed by competition to a paid position are women. In the last 10 years, there have been no female tenured professors in the Department of Anatomy. The last full professor, Prof. Dr. Liliana Macchi, continued to participate actively in anatomical activities until a few years ago. Regarding the adjunct faculty of the Department of Anatomy of the Faculty of Medicine of the

University of Buenos Aires, four of the twelve positions are held by women. Three of the professors are Doctors of Medicine.

At this moment in history, women are having a large and majority participation in our country, both as students of the subject, teaching assistants and professors. It is my opinion that these numbers are repeated in all Argentinean universities.

It is very pleasing to see how Argentinean female anatomists are recognized by the different anatomical societies, with the positions of President or Vice-President in different annual scientific meetings (Prof. Dr. Liliana Macchi, Prof. Dr. Diana Perriard, Prof. Dr. Susana Biasutto). At the same time, many colleagues, such as Dr. Inés A. Castellano, hold senior positions in the different associations.

Women's participation in anatomy learning, teaching and research has been increasing in the last decades, although there are still challenges to achieve gender equality in this area. We must continue to build this path for future generations. Data obtained from the DGOS (Dirección General de Operaciones y Sistemas de la Facultad de Medicina de la Universidad de Buenos Aires).