

## EMPATHY, GENDER PERCEPTIONS, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AMONG RESIDENT PHYSICIANS

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**BACKGROUND AND AIM:** Gender roles, molded by natural and social elements, influence individuals responsibilities and behaviors in society. From an early age, socialization processes build up gender norms, often leading to inequalities. Masculinity is frequently associated with physical strength and aggression, which can contribute to the normalization of violence against women (VAW). Empathy, the ability to understand and internalize another person's emotions and experiences, has been linked to more egalitarian gender perceptions and a lower tolerance for VAW. This study examines the relationship between empathy, gender perceptions, and attitudes toward VAW among resident physicians.

**METHODS:** The study surveyed resident physicians at Atatürk University Research Hospital through an online questionnaire. The dependent variable empathy was measured using the Toronto Empathy Scale, gender perceptions through the Perceptions of Gender Scale and attitudes toward VAW via the ISKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale. Multivariate regression analysis tested the associations between these variables,

controlling for age, gender, marital status, and medical specialty. This study was approved by the Atatürk University Ethical Board (Decision Date: 31/01/2025/ Decision Number:10).

**RESULTS:** This study included 100 participants (76 women, 24 men), aged 24-50, Mean±SD (31.17±5.01). Specialties: 6 surgical, 89 internal medicine, 5 basic sciences. Marital status: 39 single, 58 married. Preliminary findings show positive and statistically significant relations between gender perceptions and empathy scores ( $\beta=0.211$ ,  $p=0.017$ ). However, the lower tolerance toward VAW has a negative and insignificant impact on empathy scores ( $p=0.076$ ). Additionally, we observed a strong correlation between gender perception and lower acceptance of violence against women. ( $p<0.001$ ,  $r=0.851$ ).

**CONCLUSIONS:** These results suggest that physicians with more progressive gender attitudes exhibit stronger empathetic tendencies, which may influence their professional attitudes.

**Keywords:** Empathy, gender perceptions, attitudes toward violence against women