



## TITLE:

# Awareness of gender effects in the health professional-patient relationship

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### ABSTRACT (upto 300 words)

Twenty-five years have passed since the first studies on the extent to which the gender of the male or female doctor plays a role in shaping the relationship with male and female patients. Since then, a lot of evidence has accumulated on how much and in what way the health care relationship, in terms of communication and treatment, is gender conditioned. It has different characteristics in male and female professionals, for example in empathy - more attention from female doctors; the males patient more than females, preference to relate to a doctor of the same sex; in terms of differences in survival after discharge of elderly hospitalized patients treated by female internists (higher) or by male internists; in diabetes care outcomes and we could list numerous other examples.

But nothing has changed in the training of both active health professionals and university students. Explanatory models of the gender-sensitive approach to the effects of gender in the healthcare relationship are considered here.

There is no concrete acknowledgement of how much and in what way the awareness (or not) of current and future professionals affects their own heritage of gender stereotypes and prejudices acquired during the primary socialisation since the early years of life; how much, although it is a fundamental requirement of the care relationship, give importance to the related experiences and values of professionals and patients. A proposal of intervention to increase awareness of gender effects in the health professional-patient relationship.

### BIOGRAPHY (upto 200 words)

Fulvia Signani Psychologist and Health Sociologist; after about 40 years in a Local Health Authority, from the last 20 years is working as Professor in charge of Gender Sociology at the University of Ferrara. In 2009 she encountered gender medicine and wrote the first book on the subject in Italian (is publishing an updated version) Now is an active member of the National Observatory dedicated to gender medicine. She collaborates as a staff member with the Italian National Presidency of the Order of Psychologists. In this role, she is a member of the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Gender Psychology Working Group and Co-coordinator of the National Task Force on Suicide Prevention

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