

What a female surgeon world is?

Study About Obstacles That Make Surgery Far From The Female Doctors' Ambitions In Libyan Hospitals And Universities



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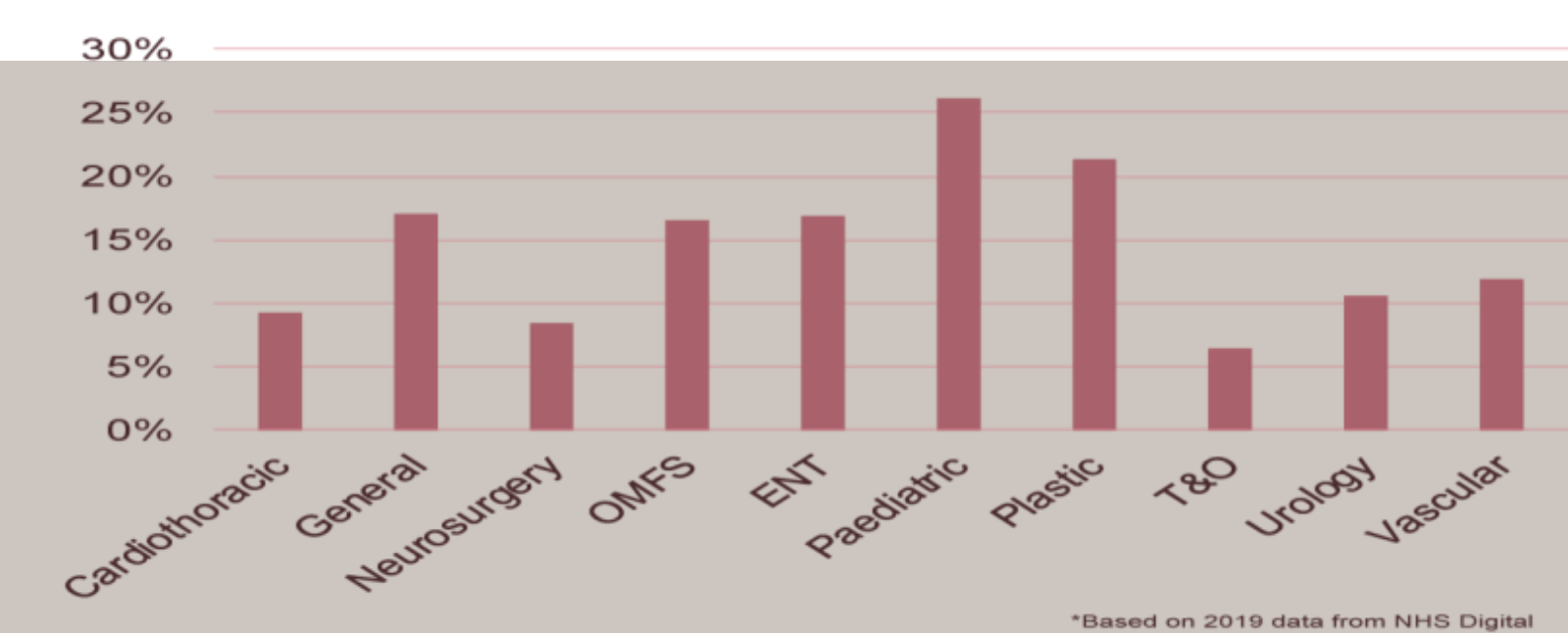
History of Women in Surgery

- In the Western world, the history of women in surgery dates back to 3500BC in Egypt, Italy and Greece. ¹
- Historically women had to 'impersonate men' in order to practice surgery. with the most famous being **Dr James Barry**, a 19th century trauma surgeon who concealed her sex throughout the duration of her practice and was only found to be female after her until his death in 18653 This was during the Middle Ages, which era was considered a very difficult and disappointing time for women in medicine in general and surgery in particular, as it was then held that a woman could not hold a leadership role professionally. ¹



James Miranda Stuart Barry (c. 1789 – 25 July 1865)

- Until **1970**, only up to **6%** of medical school admissions were women and the American College of Surgeons admitted its first woman in **1913**. ¹
- In **2001** the number of physicians who were female, rose to **24%**.
- Despite the fact that there are now as many female medical student compared with male students in universities, men still significantly outnumber women in a number of procedural specialties, most notably
- The situation would appear to be similar with both developed and developing countries. ¹
- In previous studies such as a published paper entitled "**POSTGRADUTE MEDICAL JOURNAL**" in 2012 in UK hospitals, It was shown that work-life balance is the main deterrent in a surgical career, and the paucity of female role models and perceived sexual discrimination may cause female doctors to dismiss surgery as a career. ²



Methods

- Up to our knowledge, this study is the first of its kind in Libya



Participants



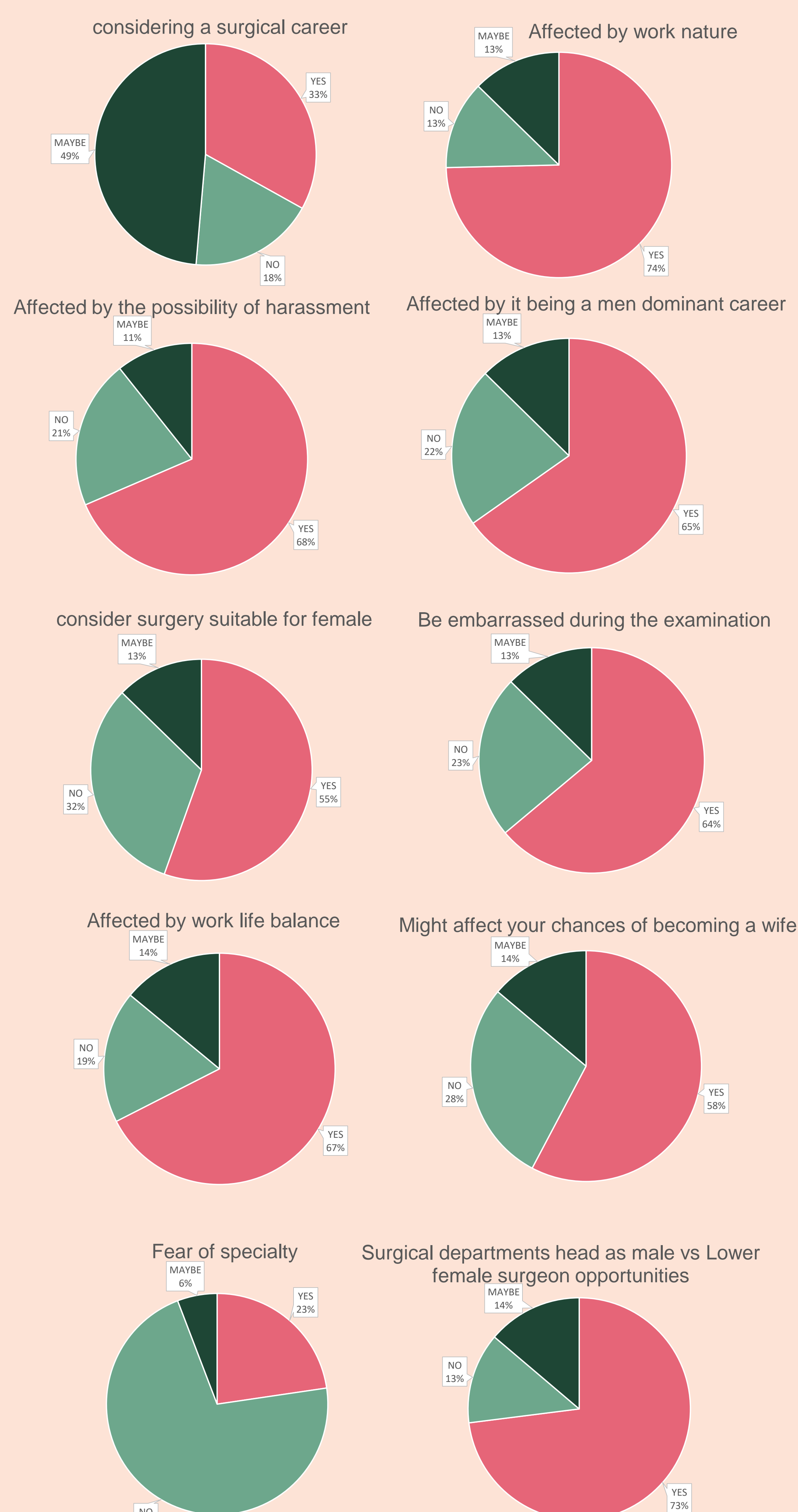
This is a cross-sectional study of two different group of participants; first group was female medical students in fourth, fifth and internship year in Libyan private & public universities, the second group was female residents' in Libyan hospital, Voluntary participation was necessary from all participants.

Questionnaire

A survey was distributed via Facebook medical groups and twitter entitled " Obstacles That Make Surgery Far From The Female Doctors' Ambitions In Libyan Hospitals And Universities" in June 2020

The questionnaire was designed to seek subjective answers related to career choice, work life balance and sexual discrimination.

RESULTS



Conclusion

The balance between work and social life and the nature, circumstances of work including working hours and sexual discrimination in society are the most important obstacles for female doctors who wish to specialize in surgery. To be a successful female surgeon doesn't always mean being famous or needing to be at the top of the class. In surgery, being one of the women who changes the percentage of female surgeons makes you an inspiration.

Reference

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Discussion

- we've had a total of **160** participants with **124 (77.5 %)** medical students and **36 (22.5%)** resident doctors.
- We found that **33%** of participants have considered surgery as a specialty. **49%** weren't sure about it ,this may relate to the higher expectations of medical students at that time.
- Generally, housework and raising children are the responsibilities of the mother. Therefore, being a surgeon or considering becoming one renders these responsibilities more strenuous. The need for balance between carrier and responsibilities are essential to maintain an adaptable lifestyle. It was noticed that **(67.1%)** of participants found this issue a major obstacle. ³
- Surgeons usually have many tasks including ward rounds, operations, clinic patients' and administration of them which, in turn, requires long working hours.⁴ **(74.2%)** of the participants agreed that longer working hours are of huge dam. The eastern society as a whole still gives dominance and biased confidence to men's abilities in the surgical field. This rendered **(65%)** female students to choose "sexual discrimination" as a reason that could prevent them from pursuing a surgical career. ³
- The dominance displayed by men in the surgical domain is implied by both the physiology of their bodies, mentality of the society and as well as the make responsibilities are concentrated on work itself.. ⁵
- The nature of male society and what gives for male doctors of infinite powers ,have made female students anxious about being harassed and disturbed , so that **68%**of students and doctors found harassment during work by male is major problem.
- Surgery is one of the professions that needs courage due to its frightening scenes and Blood splatter, frightening graphics and the fact that it requires rapid life-saving decisions. ⁴ only **23%** of participants noted this as an obstacle medical career.
- in general and specifically surgical career concentrates greatly on the privacy of the patient during the examination. ⁴ The examination of perianal area as an example may cause an embarrassment to female doctors when examining it. ^{4,5}
- Finally a **73%** of participants believed that the presence of consultant surgeons and male heads of surgical departments are not giving enough support and opportunities to new doctors especially females and **14%** were not sure if that a barrier or not.