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**NAJWA AL-MOUSLY**

Faculty of Medicine / King Fahad Medical City , Saudi Arabia

## **COMPARISON BETWEEN SAUDI FEMALE AND MALE UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN THE CLINICAL PHASE: AN EXPERIENCE FROM A NEW MEDICAL SCHOOL**

### **Abstract:**

**Background:** Academic success is considered to be a significant predictor of postgraduate achievement. There have been several studies on predictors of success in medical school regarding the influence of gender. In a previous study, our research group demonstrated that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of the male and female student in most of the courses in preclinical phase. The relationship between student gender and examination of medical knowledge and clinical competence has been assessed by other studies, and they found that female students outperformed male on both clinical evaluations and written examination. However others reported no difference.

**Aim:** The aim of this study is to investigate whether gender would make a difference on the performance of Saudi medical students in different courses of the clinical phase, and the final certifying grade point average (GPA).

**Methods:** This is a descriptive cross-sectional study. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the King Fahad Medical City Institutional Review Board for approval (IRB Number: 10-106). The final grades of clinical rotations during the clinical phase of the medical curriculum were collected for both male and female students (both gender first batch graduates), in addition to, the pre-clinical GPA and final certifying GPA. Data were statistically analyzed and the degree of statistical significance is denoted by the p-value of 0.05.

**Results:** The total number of students who has completed the sixth year in medical school were 86/100%, 34/39.5% of them were females, and 52/60.5% of them were males. Female medical students significantly outscored their male counterpart in most of the clinical subjects except for Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) course, male students were better ( $p < 0.05$ ). Although there was a difference in the grades of Medicine -II course between the two groups, but it did not reach a statistical significance ( $p > 0.05$ ). Female students scored significantly higher preclinical GPA, as well as, higher final certifying GPA ( $p < 0.05$ ). Also, the pre-clinical GPA is demonstrated to be a significant predictor to the final certifying GPA and ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The potential role gender plays when studying students' academic performance is becoming increasingly important. This study demonstrates that Saudi female medical students demonstrated superior clinical academic performance to male students. Results of this study on gender differences in academic achievement of medical students during the clinical phase may offer information and guidance for educators as well as for future healthcare employers.

### **Keywords:**

Medical students, clinical phase, gender