

Publication

Does a clinician's sex influence treatment decisions?

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PURPOSE: As more women are entering health professions, the health care system is becoming more feminized. This investigation evaluated gender differences in clinicians' treatment preferences and decision making in a complex treatment situation. **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** A questionnaire was developed containing clinical cases and statements to assess practitioners' opinions on treatment of periodontally involved maxillary molars and implant therapy with sinus grafting. Data were analyzed with respect to the clinicians' sex, and an overall logistic regression was performed to further investigate possible influences of age, office location, and specialty. **RESULTS:** Three hundred forty questionnaires were evaluated (response rate: 35.1%). The mean age of female respondents (37%) was 42 years, and the mean age of male respondents was 46 years. Significantly fewer women reported performing implant placement (35% vs 63%), sinus grafting (16% vs 43%), and periodontal surgery (57% vs 68%). Female practitioners tended to refer more patients to specialists. Participants favored sinus grafting more often for their spouses than for themselves. Apart from a preference for regenerative periodontal surgery among women, no gender differences were observed for treatment decisions or views on general statements related to implant preference, tooth maintenance, or conventional reconstructive therapies. **CONCLUSIONS:** With similar expert knowledge, treatment decisions were made irrespective of sex. While the majority of male care providers performed complex therapies themselves, female clinicians referred more patients to specialists

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