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## Criteria For Selecting Medical Training For Women And Its Guidelines:

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### Abstract:

The field of medicine is considered one of the worldly sciences essential for human well-being. The human body's ailments require treatment and care, and to address these issues, learning and practicing medicine is crucial. Islamic law permits both men and women to engage in the study and teaching of medicine, with certain conditions imposed on women during their education. Specific standards have been established for women to consider when choosing a medical specialization. This research aims to identify suitable medical specializations for Muslim women and those that may not be suitable. The study adopts an approach that combines description, analysis, and inference, dividing the research into two main elements: the criteria for choosing a suitable specialization and the guidelines for medical education for women. In conclusion, the selection of a medical specialization relies on two criteria: the individual criterion related to a woman's capabilities and nature and the societal criterion. A woman is allowed to study medicine if she adheres to the following conditions: religious eligibility, scientific competence, and ethical conduct.

**Keywords:** Medicine, Women, Specialization, Criteria.

### Introduction:

This research represents a jurisprudential approach to the issue of women's education and their role in the medical field. It highlights the necessity of their presence in certain activities and discusses it based on specializations suitable for women. The study takes into account their uniqueness and social and professional circumstances. Through this approach, the research aims to emphasize the training of women and its importance in medicine and healthcare. The presentation is concise and diverse, in accordance with contemporary jurisprudential studies. The title chosen for this research is: "Criteria for Selecting Medical Training for Women and Its Guidelines".

### - Importance of the Topic:

The significance of this topic lies in several aspects. Firstly, it relates to issues concerning women's education and their involvement in cultural production. Moreover, it addresses the

societal need for women in various medical specializations. Additionally, it elucidates the Islamic legal guidelines for women's training in the medical field.

### **- Research Problem:**

This research addresses a central question primarily related to the topic of women's education in the medical field, which is as follows: What are the suitable specializations for women's training in the medical field and what are the criteria? This leads to further questions such as:

- What are the Islamic guidelines for women's training in medical sciences?
- What are the specializations that align with the specificity and nature of women in various medical fields?

### **- Research Objectives:**

The research aims to:

1. Introduce new ideas that may contribute to leveraging women's participation in medical activities.
2. Provide useful insights for female students in medical colleges.
3. Emphasize the societal need for women in the medical field.
4. Clarify the Islamic guidelines for women's education in medical sciences.

### **- Research Components:**

To address the aforementioned issues and achieve the research objectives, I will approach them through the following components:

- Introduction:

1. Criteria for choosing the appropriate medical specialization.

1.1. The first criterion: Individual criterion.

1.2. The second criterion: Societal criterion.

2. Guidelines for women's medical education.

2.1. Religious eligibility.

2.2. Scientific competence.

2.3. Behavioral and Ethical Qualifications:

- Conclusion.

### **1. Choosing the appropriate medical specialization criteria:**

The world today is characterized by diversity and multiplicity in everything, including diseases. Rare diseases have emerged that were not known in the past, leading to the development of deeper medical specializations. These specialties involve studying specific parts of the body, the ailments affecting them, and how to clinically or surgically treat them if needed.

These specializations, with their diversity, vary in their suitability for women. Some are suitable based on their abilities and nature, as bestowed by God, while others address urgent needs within the community.

#### **1.1. \*\*Criterion 1: Biological Compatibility\*\***

The first consideration for women in choosing a specialization is the alignment of the specialization with the nature and innate abilities that God has endowed them with. Some medical specializations that align with women's nature include:

### **1.1.1. \*\*Obstetrics and Gynecology:\*\***

Specializing in 'Obstetrics and Gynecology' is considered one of the medical fields directly related to female doctors. They have a deeper understanding of the details of women's bodies and the processes they go through. Moreover, they play a crucial role in the childbirth process and its aftermath. As a result, they are the closest people to the patients, experts in what happens to them. Additionally, their specialization in this field alleviates the discomfort for many Muslim women, as they are not compelled to undergo examinations by male doctors.

From this major, two specializations branch out:

- Obstetrics: Diagnoses and treats women's diseases, performs deliveries, including cesarean sections.

- Gynecology: Diagnoses and treats female reproductive organ problems, advises on family planning, and handles pregnancy and childbirth.

And on this basis, it can be said that specializing in this field is unanimously agreed upon by both men and women. It is considered obligatory for women to study it, and no rational Muslim would contradict that. It is said, 'It is better for the girl and society to have studies in public health, even if she is not specialized in medicine, especially in matters related to women's health. This enables her to treat other women, as many men prefer not to have their wives treated by male doctors. If necessity requires it, the husband often experiences psychological distress and discomfort'<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.1.2. \*\*Medical Oncology:\*\***

Focuses on diagnosing, treating, and preventing cancer. Given the prevalence of cancer, especially among women, early diagnosis may require frequent visits to doctors, making this specialization crucial.

### **1.1.3. \*\*Pediatrics:\*\***

Recognizing women's inherent qualities of tenderness and compassion, pediatrics involves caring for children, from infancy to adolescence, addressing physical, mental, and emotional aspects. Pediatric specialties include :

- pediatric anesthesia: A science that focuses on the methods of anesthesia and sedation for pediatric patients undergoing surgical procedures. Anesthetic and resuscitation methods vary based on age, weight, and the body's ability to tolerate certain substances used in anesthesia.

- Pediatric Surgery (Chirurgie Pédiatrique): A specialized field in which practitioners focus on surgical procedures for children from birth to adolescence.

- General Pediatrics: A medical specialization that deals with childhood diseases and growth-related issues from birth to adolescence. It encompasses various aspects of physical and psychological development, including the treatment of diseases, disabilities, and various health conditions<sup>2</sup>.

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#### **1.1.4. \*\*Midwifery:\*\***

Midwives assist in childbirth<sup>3</sup>, providing an alternative for women who may prefer female healthcare providers. Islam emphasizes the importance of maintaining modesty and privacy in healthcare.

In summary, these specializations, aligned with women's abilities and the community's needs, play a crucial role in healthcare. Ibn Khaldun<sup>4</sup> and Dr. Nour al-Din Atr<sup>5</sup> highlight the significance of women's involvement in both medicine and midwifery, respecting the principles of Islamic modesty and the community's well-being.

#### **1.1.5. \*\*Nursing:\*\***

The nursing profession requires the presence of two innate qualities: mercy and compassion. These qualities are inherent in women's femininity. Nursing, as a quasi-medical field, is divided into two levels of training:

- **\*\*Registered Nurse (Public Health):\*\***

Responsible for implementing medical prescriptions, various treatments, participating in clinical monitoring of diseases, treatment methods, and more. They protect the physical and mental health of individuals, execute nursing treatments based on medical prescriptions or under the supervision of a doctor, receive and mentor students and interns, monitor the health status and evaluate it, and program unit team activities.

- **\*\*Nursing Assistant (Public Health), Assistant to the Registered Nurse:\*\***

Responsible for the physical hygiene of patients, basic nursing treatments, and tasks related to patient care. They also assist in maintaining facilities, arranging equipment, observing and collecting information related to the patient's health, and reporting this data in writing and verbally for continuity of treatment.

Both the nurse and her assistant work under the supervision of the doctor and follow his orders. Therefore:

- If the supervisor is a female doctor, having a nurse is an additional benefit.

- If the supervisor is a male doctor:

The nurse<sup>6</sup> plays a role in removing embarrassment from women, and she is rewarded for that, especially if she observes and intends it. She eliminates the prohibition of seclusion between the doctor and the female patient. On the other hand, she takes on the direct treatment by giving injections and medicine to the patient, monitoring her health and condition. This is what some Muslim doctors used to do, such as the physician Al-Razi, may Allah have mercy on him. For example, he used to ask the midwife to examine the woman after guiding her on the examination method and its purpose – this is in the field of women's diseases. It is evident that an experienced midwife in obstetrics, who is also a nurse, has gained expertise in knowing the examination method<sup>7</sup>. This indicates that he used to appoint a nurse to assist in such situations, making her more like a mediator between them without embarrassment. If it is said that the work of some women in the field of nursing and treating women is a duty, this is not far-fetched. Leaving this specialization entirely to men would be impractical<sup>8</sup>.

#### **1.1.6. \*\*Child Care Assistants (Public Health):\*\***

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Given women's natural inclination towards childcare, there is a need for assistants in monitoring and caring for children, maintaining their physical cleanliness, and assisting in healthcare-related tasks.

#### **1.1.7. \*\*Social Care Assistants:\*\***

Responsible for providing medical and social assistance to patients, their families, and children facing challenging situations. Women, with their nurturing and caring nature, are well-suited for this role.

#### **1.1.8. \*\*Nutrition Specialists:\*\***

It is known that women have informed people about food, and it is what qualifies her by her nature. She is a mother, daughter, sister, and wife. The author of the book "Motherhood in the Quran and Sunnah" says: "It is better for the girl and society to have studies in general nutrition, and the nutritional value of various foods to organize family meals based on this knowledge, especially regarding child nutrition. This is because many diseases that affect children often result from the mother's neglect of the child's diet."<sup>9</sup> If she acquires this knowledge, she can benefit herself, her family, and her community, guiding them to a healthier and more beneficial diet. The stomach is the house of disease, and moderation is the essence of every remedy<sup>10</sup>.

### **1.2. \*\*Criterion 2: Societal Needs\*\***

Societies have diverse needs and requirements for various specialties. There is a need for medical professionals and educators to train and qualify individuals in specific fields:

#### **1.2.1. \*\*Community's Need for Medical Treatment:\*\***

In a time where diseases are prevalent and diverse, there is a need for individuals to diagnose and treat them while preserving people's modesty. Specializations like:

##### **1.2.1.1. Cardiology:**

This is a specialization related to the diagnosis and treatment of heart problems, disorders, and vascular diseases. Therefore, during treatment, it is necessary to examine the patient's chest to locate the heart, and one of the examination requirements is to perform procedures such as electrocardiography and endoscopy.

##### **1.2.1.2. Pulmonology:**

Based on the previous context, we find that society needs women to specialize in this type of medicine to be involved in diagnosing and treating chest and lung problems and disorders.

##### **1.2.1.3. Endocrinology:**

This is because all types of thyroid diseases are more common in women<sup>11</sup>, and they are diagnosed through examining the neck in case of gland enlargement and excessive functioning, or through radiological examination, in addition to analyzing a sample of the patient's blood.

##### **1.2.1.4. Gastroenterology:**

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Specializing in women's healthcare is a good thing because most individuals affected by digestive system diseases, especially duodenal ulcers and gallbladder issues, are women. These diseases are diagnosed through various methods such as tests, endoscopy<sup>12</sup>, radiological imaging, and sometimes require procedures like colonoscopy and hemorrhoid examination. All of these may make it more comfortable for a woman to be treated by a female healthcare provider.

#### **1.2.1.5. Dermatology:**

Because diagnosing the disease requires examining the site of infection and, consequently, inspecting their bodies and heads for the presence of the disease, such as hair loss, varicose veins that affect women, signs of childbirth, and other skin diseases and their diagnosis.

#### **1.2.1.6. Rheumatology:**

This specialization focuses on diagnosing and treating joint diseases and disorders, which are more common in women. The causes include a lack of exercise, pregnancy, and a deficiency of female hormones at a certain stage<sup>13</sup>.

Essential having women specialize in these areas can contribute positively, especially in maintaining modesty during examinations and treatments.

The societal need for healthcare providers, educators, and specialists is evident, and aligning women with these roles can not only address the specific healthcare needs of women but also contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

#### **1.2.1.7. Health Specializations:**

##### **• Physical Therapy and Physiotherapy Specialists:**

Some patients require medical massage and specific exercises for treating conditions and improving the functions of certain organs, such as those affected by hemiplegia, rheumatism, and others. Consequently, this type of treatment relies on direct patient touch.

The training in this specialization ranges from the position of a qualified medical masseur to that of an excellent specialist in physical therapy and physiotherapy for public health. Their duties include gathering clinical data, conducting an assessment of physical therapy, determining the goals of the treatment program, specifying rehabilitation and adaptation therapies to be implemented, and applying rehabilitation techniques suitable for patients and diseases. They also develop and implement an emergency intervention program in the field.

##### **• Dental Surgeon Assistants:**

Similar to what was mentioned earlier for nurses, their role involves receiving patients and preparing them for treatment.

##### **• Laboratory Technicians:**

The necessity of conducting medical tests for diagnosing diseases is undeniable. It is advisable to train laboratory technicians to perform these analyses for female patients, considering the sensitivity and privacy related to diseases of the glands and diabetes.

• **Medical Assistants:**

Their role is to assist female doctors in their clinic duties, which includes helping doctors compile medical records, manage and store them, and facilitate relationships with patients, their families, and social medical teams.

• **Mental Movement Facilitators:**

As their job is to treat individuals with neurological and psychological movement disorders, such as those suffering from respiratory difficulties, their focus is on the lungs or chest as the area of treatment.

**1.2.2. Community Needs for Training:**

All the aforementioned specializations require knowledge of the body and its nature through analytical laboratory specializations. Some of these specializations include:

**1.2.2.1. General Anatomy (Anatomie générale):**

This specialization involves studying the body, understanding organ characteristics, and their interconnections for the purpose of medical learning<sup>14</sup>. Islamic law permits the dissection of corpses when it is a necessary means for education and mastering the medical profession to train competent doctors who can benefit the Islamic community<sup>15</sup>.

**1.2.2.2. Pathological Anatomy (Anatomie -Pathologique):**

This science focuses on studying samples taken from tissues and body cells to diagnose diseases and differentiate between benign and malignant conditions, including cancer.

**1.2.2.3. • Histology, Embryology, and Genetics (Histologie-embryologie et génétique):**

This specialization investigates human genetics and the links between genes and diseases. It enables the diagnosis of various diseases, the identification of hereditary transmission, and the discovery of genetic aspects that can be prevented. Specialists in this field are required for teaching and training female students. In the semi-medical field, educators are needed who are selected after testing from among professionals in the field with at least five years of practical experience for a two-year training program.

**2. Medical Training Guidelines for Women:**

The study of the mentioned specializations adheres to religious guidelines that need to be clarified. These guidelines generally relate to women's education in various fields, especially in medicine, to ensure that the process achieves its objectives and is conducted safely<sup>16</sup>.

These guidelines can be summarized in the following points:

**2.1. Religious Eligibility:**

This involves aspects such as:

**2.1.1. Rectifying Intentions and Sincerity to Allah:**

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Muslim female students must dedicate their intentions to Allah, aligning with the Sunnah, aiding fellow Muslims<sup>17</sup>, alleviating their sorrows, and participating in their trials and tribulations while concealing the faults of their sisters. This sincerity ensures reward for their learning and work. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Actions are but by intention, and every man shall have only that which he intended..."<sup>18</sup> The significance of this Hadith lies in highlighting the benefits of a sincere intention and the harm of a corrupt one, emphasizing the connection of actions to intentions. Therefore, one should not be deceived by the outward goodness of their actions if their intentions are corrupt. Actions take the color of their intentions, whether good or bad<sup>19</sup>.

### **2.1.2. Obtaining Permission from the Guardian<sup>20</sup>:**

Muslim female students need to seek permission from their parents or their authorized representatives, especially in cases where their parents are not available. Obedience to parents is an absolute duty, except when it involves disobedience to Allah. Studying medicine becomes obligatory unless there is a valid reason preventing the female student from pursuing medical education.

Abu Ad-Darda reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised me with nine things: "...Obey your parents, even if they command you to leave this world. Beware! You leave only to go to them."<sup>21</sup> Parents should consider the needs of the community and assess their daughter's eligibility. If she possesses the necessary qualities both in knowledge and religion, they should not prevent her. Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) highlighted the importance of considering a child's readiness for responsibilities and actions. The child must be aware, possess a good understanding, be capable of memorization, and be conscious of their responsibilities. These signs indicate acceptance and readiness for knowledge, allowing the child to succeed and settle into it.<sup>22</sup>

### **2.1.3. Commitment to Islamic Veiling**

Every Muslim woman must adhere to the Islamic veil and its conditions<sup>23</sup>, avoiding any form of immodesty and indecency. She should refrain from adorning herself, using fragrance, or engaging in conversations with a suggestive tone while maintaining lowered gaze<sup>24</sup>.

## **2.2. Educational Eligibility**

Those aspiring to study medicine should possess academic qualifications, including:

### **2.2.1. Appropriate Academic and Cultural Level:**

One of the crucial criteria for pursuing medical studies is the high academic level of Muslim female students, encompassing intelligence, genuine interest in the field, and a strong determination<sup>25</sup>. Given the effort and dedication required for medical education, the student should be committed to learning, understanding the subject matter<sup>26</sup>, and establishing a solid foundation.

### **2.2.2. Seriousness and Diligence:**

Medical education aims to graduate human resources capable of caring for individual and community health<sup>27</sup>. This necessitates significant effort and time commitment to expand



knowledge through various means, ensuring a profound understanding of the subject matter and a commitment to seriousness<sup>28</sup>.

The student should prioritize gaining knowledge for personal development and then contributing to her family, nation, and the Muslim community. Seeking the pleasure of Allah in her work and seeking His help in her endeavors is crucial, as Allah is the supporter of His servant as long as the servant supports their brother<sup>29</sup>.

### **2.3. Behavioral and Ethical Qualification:**

This involves:

#### **2.3.1. Avoidance of Unnecessary Mixing:**

Given the prevalent issue of intermingling in society, Muslim women should exercise caution in various settings, such as university lecture halls, study classes, public transportation<sup>30</sup>, etc. Imam Ibn Qayyim emphasized the dangers of unchecked mixing, stating that allowing women to freely mix with men is a significant cause of general punishments and societal corruption<sup>31</sup>.

#### **2.3.2. Abstaining from Travel Without a Mahram:**

Muslim women should avoid traveling without a Mahram unless it is essential<sup>32</sup>. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated, "A woman should not travel for more than a day and a night except with a Mahram."<sup>33</sup> Thus, ensuring secure accommodations and abiding by Shari'a regulations is essential.

#### **2.3.3. Avoidance of Seclusion:**

Muslim women should refrain from being alone with unrelated men, particularly due to the prevalent moral decay in society. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ warned against seclusion, stating, "No man is alone with a woman except the devil is the third among them."<sup>34</sup> Therefore, maintaining modesty and avoiding isolation is crucial for safeguarding personal virtue.

These guidelines aim to uphold Islamic values and principles while ensuring the proper education and professional development of Muslim women in the medical field.

### **The conclusion:**

Praise be to Allah, who aided us in completing this research. The summary of our findings and recommendations is as follows:

- The learning of medicine by women is permissible, and it is incumbent upon them, when eligible, to pursue its study in the absence of someone else fulfilling the community's need.
- The permissibility for a woman to study medicine is subject to three criteria: religious eligibility, scientific competence, and ethical conduct.
- Among the medical and quasi-medical specializations, there are those that align with a woman's nature and aptitude, addressing societal needs. However, some may not be suitable for her at all.

This research serves as a prelude to more in-depth studies. We encourage readers to:

- Explore the details of the regulations governing medical education and practice.

- Call upon doctors and medical students to pay attention to the regulations governing their learning and work, and advocate for their implementation through both words and actions. They should investigate what we have mentioned and the feasibility of putting it into practice."

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<sup>23</sup> So, she should not display any of her adornment, and she should cover her entire body (with differences in the face and hands) with any type or style of clothing, with the condition that it is: covering her entire body, not in itself an adornment, loose, not transparent, and not resembling the clothing of men or non-Muslim women, and not famous attire. Muhammad Ahmad Ismail al-Muqaddam, The Return of the Hijab, Dar al-Qimah, Dar al-Iman, Egypt-Alexandria, Vol. 3, (2004 AD), page 153.

<sup>24</sup> Refer to Aisha Muhammad Khudr al-Zahrani, The Exit of Women and Related Legal Rules, Vol. 1, pages 352-353.

<sup>25</sup> "The medical profession is a demanding career, and a physician faces significant challenges in balancing responsibilities within their profession, family, and personal social relationships. Therefore, do not rush to make decisions." - Mohammad Aabid Bakhtmah, "Studying Medicine: Challenges and Responsibilities," p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> Narrated by Hudhaifah, he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) saying, "Whoever seeks knowledge to compete with the scholars or to argue with the foolish or to turn the faces of people, then he has a portion of Hellfire." - Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir wa Ziyadatihi, Hadith No. 6381, Vol. 2, p. 1091.

<sup>27</sup> Ali Musa, "Islamic Medical Education," Sunday, April 5, 2015, <http://arab.islamicmedicines.com>.

<sup>28</sup> See Mohammad Aabid Bakhtmah, "Studying Medicine: Challenges and Responsibilities," p. 52.

<sup>29</sup> Mohammad Aabid Bakhtmah, "Studying Medicine: Challenges and Responsibilities," p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> Abdul Rahman al-Shathri compiled fatwas and statements of Islamic scholars worldwide on gender mixing in education. <http://www.alukah.net/library/0/23164/> Refer to the continuation (for Atiya Salem) "Adwa' al-Bayan fi Iyadh al-Qur'an bil-Qur'an," Muhammad al-Amin bin Muhammad al-Mukhtar al-Shanqiti, Vol. 9, pp. 361-362.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, "Al-Turuq al-Hukmiyyah fi al-Siyasah al-Shar'iyyah," Dar al-Bayan, Syria-Damascus, 1st ed., 1410 AH, Vol. 1, p. 239.

<sup>32</sup> Aisha Muhammad Khidr al-Zahrani, "The Exit of Women and Related Sharia Rulings," Vol. 1, pp. 352-353.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari, "Sahih al-Bukhari," Book of Jihad and Campaigns, Chapter: The One Who Enlists in an Army and His Wife Goes out of Need, Hadith No. 3006, Vol. 4, p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal, "Musnad al-Imam Ahmad," Edited by Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut and others, Mu'assasat al-Risalah, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1421 AH, Musnad Umar bin al-Khattab, Hadith No. 178, Vol. 1, p. 311.