



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Women in the Medical Field: West Asia

Dr. Suad Joseph, General Editor

Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Women and Gender Studies, University of California, Davis

EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ The number of women pursuing degrees and working in the medical field is increasing within nations like Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia and in most cases, women make up more than half of health science graduates; however, women generally represent less than 50% of individuals in health-related faculty positions and higher positions within medical practices in West Asia and the Arab Gulf States.¹²
- ❖ According to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), Lebanese women currently comprise 79% of the public workforce in the healthcare system, with the private sector providing 80.5% of the total employment.³
- ❖ For many decades, the nursing workforce of Saudi Arabia has relied on international expatriates to be the backbone of the industry. More recently, an increasing number of Saudi women have been recruited into nursing preparation courses.⁴
- ❖ Based on a 2014 UN Women Report on Jordan, the percentage of females pursuing an undergraduate degree in the medicine grew from 30.3% to 39.4% from 2005-2011.⁵
- ❖ According to the Qatar Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Housing, there are 500 Qatari women working in the health field as opposed to 357 Qatari men; furthermore, Qatari women represent 21% of the total number of 272 nurses working at the Qatar Ministry of Public Health.⁶
- ❖ In a 2002 Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialization paper on “the Role of Medical Education in Kuwait,” it was found that the majority of Kuwaiti physicians in the specialties of obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics and family medicine are female. However, the majority of physicians in the surgery and internal medicine field are male.⁷
- ❖ In a November 2014 article published by Hurriyet Daily News, the oldest daily news source in Turkey, it was reported that 35% of students in the medical sciences in Turkey are women, whereas this number significantly decreases to 7% in Germany and 17% in the European Union.⁸

¹ <http://www.natureasia.com/en/nmiddleeast/article/10.1038/nmiddleeast.2014.285>

² <http://www.missionislam.com/science/mwscience.htm>

³ Ministry of Public Health: Lebanon National Health Accounts. Prepared in collaboration with the World Health Organization and World Bank. Beirut, Lebanon, 2000.

⁴ <http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume112006/No3Sept06/ArticlePreviousTopics/WomeninNursinginSaudiArabia.html>

⁵ <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/field%20office%20jordan/attachments/publications/2014/ict-study-updatedtxt-4.pdf?v=1&d=20141028T151758>

⁶ <http://www.hziegler.com/articles/role-of-women-in-qatar.html>

⁷ <http://www.kims.org.kw/bulletin/Issues/issue2/NationalMedEd.pdf>

⁸ <http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkey-atypical-in-terms-of-strong-presence-of-women-in-academia.aspx?pageID=238&nID=73770&NewsCatID=341>