

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

October 2018

Introduction

By approving these ten commandments, the Spanish General Medical Council (CGCOM) is adopting a public stance on respect for the principle of gender equality in the medical profession and it will work to ensure compliance in all aspects affecting the profession.

Gender equality is a human right with a core value in the development of societies. In Spain, women have progressively joined the medical profession in the last century and today, they constitute the majority of registered members. These ten commandments aim to encourage advances in the culture of the medical profession with a view to improving gender equality.

These ten commandments were drawn up in the framework of the Gender and Profession Task Force founded by the CGCOM and which began its activity in September 2017 with the goal of analysing the profession with a focus on gender. To support its work, a demographic study was carried out. This study showed that despite the fact the situation is likely to change, certain conditions persist in the organisational culture that hinder gender equality. The Task Force noted that conscious, decisive action is necessary to improve these conditions and these ten commandments are a result of this conviction.

This is all related to the social role traditionally assigned to women, with the organisation of the job market failing to consider sufficient measures that aid the personal and work life balance and with an imbalance in the number of women and men in representation and decision-making spaces.

The ten commandments aim to be the first step towards building a medical profession whose organisation removes any conditioning factor that prevents an equal presence of women in all areas.

The Spanish General Medical Council wishes to encourage debate and implement proposals to ensure the National Health System in Spain does not miss out on the potential inherent to the contribution of women who practise medicine, as well as

review the current situation and improve their position in decision-making spaces.

Preamble

The Spanish General Medical Council, in its role of ensuring the equal rights of medical professionals in their activity:

Reminds people that gender equality is a basic principle in our democracy, which is reflected in legal texts.

Underlines the importance of the fact that women have been accessing the medical profession for years and that they now comprise more than half of all professionals.

Believes that an improvement in organisational conditions and the balance in the representation of women and men in the profession will have positive results for both equality between professionals and society as a whole.

Accepts that it must establish an organisational system in the profession that considers the new social relationships that have emerged and a new form of cooperation and engagement between women and men that allow for responsibilities to be shared equally in their professional and personal lives.

It has drawn up these ten commandments for gender equality in the medical profession and invites the medical associations to subscribe to them.

General Principles

- Law 3/2007, of 22 March, on effective gender equality, considers the following general principles that affect this charter in particular:
 1. Equal treatment between women and men, which implies the absence of all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, based on sex and, in particular, any derived from maternity, the acceptance of family obligations or marital status (Art. 3).
 2. The cross-sectoral nature of the principle of equal treatment between women and men, which must inform the actions of all public powers (Art. 15).
 3. The inclusion of the principle of equality in health policy (Art. 27).

The Ten Commandments

1. Encourage a cultural change among medical professionals in the interest of gender equality.
2. Undertake campaigns on co-responsibility between men and women.
3. Ask the different health administrations to draw up master plans for equality and their inclusion in the corresponding strategic plans, as well as communicate the need to prepare specific plans for its implementation.
4. Demand that the public administrations strengthen work/life balance plans, setting out clear criteria and objectives that prevent subjective interpretations when applying the necessary organisational changes in order to continue making strides in terms of balancing the personal, family and work lives of all medical staff.
5. Call on the administrations to promote and include the gender perspective in health plans.
6. Work in the interest of encouraging the presence of female doctors in decision-making spaces.
7. Work to identify the factors that condition sex discrimination and the current gender gap in health, and make proposals for improvements.
8. Urge the different health administrations to ensure situations of pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding and adoption do not involve any monetary decreases.
9. Carry out awareness campaigns regarding sexual and/or occupational harassment, working to prevent this and to establish protocols for reporting such situations.
10. With the aim of monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the proposals drawn up, the CGCOM has committed to establishing an "Observatory for Equality in the Medical Profession".