

# A Case Study Analysis of Medical Gaslighting Among Female Patients

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# Introduction/Rationale

- Investigate where the problem started in history
  - Hippocrates and the Wandering Uterus

(Adair, 1996)



**Figure 1**  
*Wandering Uterus*  
Created by Lindsay Anton

# Introduction/Rationale

- Unfortunately, this medical gaslighting continues today (Santoro, 2019)
- Women are still medically mistreated (Covan, 2022)
- Medical gaslighting is the downplaying of patient's physical symptom (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)

# Research Question:

"To what extent does bias affect medical gaslighting amongst female patients today?"

# Road Map

1. Provide methodology
2. Analyze results
3. Identify cause and effect
4. Prescribe macro, micro, and personal solutions

# Methodology

- Qualitative: Case Study Analysis
- Data sample: 30 cases of medical gaslighting
- 20 personal interviews, 10 published stories
- Analyze each narrative, find similarities and patterns
- Compare results to common literature about the topic to find correlation
- Identify cause and effect

# Case Studies

- Personal interviews will remain anonymous for their medical privacy
- Published stories found through news outlets (Carter, 2021; Dusenbery, 2018; Gershon, 2021; Jamie, 2020; Medaris, 2022; Michelson, 2023; Moyer, 2022; Solon, 2020; Tait, 2019)

# Case Studies

- Common Language/Themes

(Anonymous Interviews, 2022-2023)

"Pain was trivialized"

"Doctors made me feel crazy"

"They wrote me off"

"Told me my pain was simply from hormones"

"Felt unseen and unheard"

"They said the pain was all in my head"

"They didn't give me any pain medicine"

"I was misdiagnosed for years"



Cause

# Cause

- Females are unrepresented in medical research (Smith, 2021)
  - Because of historic bias, woman are overlooked in various types medical research
- Examples:
  - Mental Health (Smith, 2021)
  - Heart Attacks (American Heart Association, 2022)
  - Cancer (Ganz et al., 2022)

Effects

# Effects

## 1. Minimization of Pain

- Systemic bias influences how we perceive a woman's pain (Zhang, 2021)

## 2. Misdiagnosis

- With the lack of research involving female patients, health care professionals are more likely misdiagnose woman
- Without the proper perception of one's pain, doctors cannot accurately source the diagnosis (Reiter, 2020)

# Solvency/Contributions

## Macro Solutions:

1. Implicit Bias Training (NIH, 2023)
  - Approved by Department Chair and Dean of the School
  - Add online course into the degree completion plan
  - Address bias from a young age
2. Donate to Woman's Health Research (WHR, n.d.)
  - They're dedicated to conducting research on biological sex differences
  - Solves the lack of research problem

# Solvency/Contributions

## Mirco Solution:

1. Develop relationships with medical professionals
  - We can develop open and honest lines of communication
  - This communication can bring awareness to issue and help medical professionals make more informed diagnoses

# Solvency/Contributions

## Personal Solutions:

1. Woman: advocate for yourself
  - Force them to acknowledge your pain
2. Men: join women for critical doctor appointments  
Woman advocate for yourself
  - Doctors are more likely to believe men (Mckeen, 2020)

# Contribution to Discipline

- This study explores how gender biases can affect the way female patients are treated
- The solutions provides ways to communicate with patients and healthcare providers



Questions?

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