



***In Conversation With Commissioner Simone Diniz
Gender Violence in Health Institutions as a Global Health Issue***

25 May 2022

Background

The globalisation of maternal care has led to increased access to essential resources, contributing to the reduction of avoidable deaths and suffering. However, it has also led to an increase in the overmedicalisation of the childbearing cycle. In LMICs, a combination of “*too much, too soon*” and “*too little, too late*” health care frequently coexists, with little regulation or monitoring of health practices and products. The forms of overmedicalisation are different for poorer and wealthier women. Health systems are additionally stressed not only by unnecessary interventions, but with their potential adverse effects, which can hit harder for the most vulnerable, who have less access to tertiary care.

In recent decades, social movements around the world have challenged the persistence of aggressive interventions, with little or no evidence of effectiveness or safety, despite national and international guidelines recommending changes. Women have denounced the callousness of communication and ambience, and demanded the right to shared decision-making, affirming that the high acceptance of cesarean sections was caused by the experience of abuse and disrespect in childbirth, together with conflicts of interest. In Latin America, the movements for humanisation of childbirth have tried to influence public policies, legislation, and providers’ training, and in recent years, in several countries a new demand for justice was named: the end of obstetric violence.

In this seminar, we want to explore how naming violence against women in health institutions (and many related terms) as a global health issue reignites the debate in fields of health and gender violence to induce change, in both the global South and North. In many settings, it is called “abuse and disrespect”, a very self-explanatory expression, and there is growing research and action interest in the Global South. Many recent initiatives in local and international levels have promoted change. Through concrete examples of minor and major changes, we highlight the intersectionality of this form of violence, the role of social movements in creating new demands and health indicators, and the responsibilities of governments and educational institutions in overcoming this form of gender violence. We invite commissioners and the audience to share their experiences.

Seminar objectives

- Explore how obstetric violence/abuse and disrespect in health care emerged as a global health issue, exposing contradictions in maternal health care and reframing the field.
- Highlight local and international initiatives to promote change, the creation of new concepts and indicators, and potential enablers and barriers for change.

Format

The 60-minute *In Conversation With...* series is structured to be forward-looking, solutions-focused, and conversational. The Commissioner will begin with a short presentation to set the scene. In the following conversation, speakers are encouraged to highlight promising approaches with concrete examples. An interactive session will follow to highlight interventions and questions from diverse stakeholders within the audience. The Commissioner will bring the webinar to a close with a concise summary of the key issues raised and the way forward.

Series outcomes

- Strengthen, grow, and connect the Commission and the UNU Gender and Health Hub's online and offline communities for increased knowledge sharing and synergized action towards more evidence-based and better-resourced integration of gender in health policies and programmes.
- Engage with external voices to enable the Commission to include new perspectives – particularly those who can challenge, enrich, and help develop the Commission's work.
- Create broader buy-in, seek feedback, and ensure the relevance of the Commission's work to diverse stakeholders, including the network of policymakers, academics, and implementers involved in the UNU Gender and Health Hub.
- Amplify existing efforts and support evidence-based policy action to catalyse system-wide change in gender and health.

Provisional programme

Time (UTC)	Programme	Speakers
12:00–12:05 (05 min)	Welcome and Introductions	Sarah Hawkes , Director, UCL Centre for Gender and Global Health

12:05–12:15 (10 min)	Setting the Scene [PPT]	Simone Diniz, Commissioner
Panel conversation		
12:15–12:25 (Q1 10 min)	Contemporary Challenges: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did it take so long for the recognition of A&D? • What are the barriers to and enablers for change? 	Moderated by Simone Diniz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daphne Rattner • Ana Flavia
12:25–12:35 (Q2 10 min)	Towards Solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How do social movements at the local and international level confront A&D?</i> • <i>What are the intersectional dimensions of A&D?</i> • <i>How to deal with professional and financial conflicts of interest?</i> • <i>How can educational, institutional, and government actors help or hinder change?</i> 	
12:35–12:40 (Q3 5 min)	Closing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working towards an international movement against gender violence in health care 	
12:40–12:55 (15 min)	Possible audience interaction Audience questions from live chat	<i>Moderated by Simone Diniz</i>
12:55–13:00 (05 min)	Summary and wrap-up Closing remarks	Sarah Hawkes

The **Lancet Commission on Gender and Global Health** responds to the pressing need for substantial, structural, and system-wide change if we are to see considerable progress on gender equality and health equity by 2030. Learn more at genderandhealthcommission.org.

For more information, please contact:

- **Tiffany Nassiri-Ansari**, LCGGH Secretariat: nassiri@unu.edu