

# Perceptions of Gender Bias Faced by PHCM 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Male Nursing Students in OB Ward Patient Care

Vargas, Ruby D.  
rdovperps@yahoo.com

Pangadlo, Thea Fei V.  
pangadlothea13@gmail.com

Bestudio, Phoebe L.  
phobelbestudio@gmail.com

Silarde, Jainah Pearl S.  
jainagsilarde678@gmail.com

Bestudio, Trinity L.  
trinity.bestudio@gmail.com

Constantino, Evelyn A.  
evelynaconstantino11@gmail.com

1 – University of Perpetual Help System Manila, Philippines

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## Abstract

This descriptive qualitative study explored perceptions of gender bias experienced by Level II male nursing students from Perpetual Help College of Manila during their OB ward clinical rotations. Grounded in Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring and Madeleine Leininger's Culture Care Theory, the research used purposive sampling to recruit approximately 12 male nursing students and collected data through one-on-one semi-structured interviews lasting 25 to 30 minutes. Audio recordings and field notes were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings. Findings revealed five key themes: awareness and recognition of gender bias; task assignment based on gender; limited clinical exposure to intimate OB procedures; coping mechanisms used by students; and suggestions for more inclusive practice. Many participants reported that patient discomfort and prevailing gender expectations often resulted in female nursing students being prioritized for intimate procedures while male students were more often given physically demanding or supportive tasks. These patterns contributed to reduced hands-on learning opportunities and lower confidence in performing essential OB skills among some male students. At the same time, participants demonstrated resilience by using strategies such as careful consent-seeking, coordination with female classmates, active volunteering, and seeking mentorship. Based on these findings the study recommends implementing gender sensitivity training for clinical instructors and staff, orienting patients about the role of male nurses, in obstetrical care, creating institutional guidelines that ensures equitable task distribution, rotating procedure assignments so students gain balanced experience, expanding simulation-based training for male students before clinical exposure, and establishing peer mentoring or shadowing opportunities with both male and female nursing students. These measures aim to foster an inclusive learning environment where assessment is competency-based and all students have equitable access to essential OB experiences. The study concludes that addressing institutional and cultural factors will enhance student clinical competence and professional development while supporting high quality, patient-centered.

**Keywords:** *Gender Bias, Male Nursing Students, Obstetrics Care, Inclusive Nursing Education*



## INTRODUCTION

Nursing has been long perceived as a female-dominated profession, a legacy rooted in cultural and historical contexts that associate caregiving and nurturing roles with women. This gendered perception has shaped the nursing profession for centuries, with women often being seen as the primary caregivers in both familial and healthcare settings. As a result, nursing has been positioned as a vocation that aligns with the traditional roles of women in the society. Despite efforts to promote gender diversity in nursing, men continue to represent minorities in the nursing field. As of 2019, men makeup approximately 10% of the global nursing workforce, with this variation often reflected in the experiences of male nursing students during their education and clinical practice (Yip et al., 2021). Gender bias within the nursing profession especially in the OB settings not only reinforces traditional stereotypes but also creates barriers to inclusivity and equity.

Male nursing students often face challenges that are distinct from their female counterparts. A significant issue is the limited clinical exposure to sensitive care areas, such as maternity and obstetrics. Restrictions in these areas are frequently justified by societal norms and perceived patient discomfort, which diminish the opportunities for male students to develop comprehensive nursing skills (Agomoh, C. J., & Iheduru-Anderson, K. 2024). These limitations are compounded by the perception that male nurses are better suited for physically demanding tasks, such as lifting patients or managing aggressive individuals, reducing their participation in holistic caregiving practices (Budu, H.I., et al, 2019). It also reinforces outdated gender norms that may discourage men from pursuing roles in nursing that require compassion and emotional labor. Moreover, these biases can negatively affect patient care, as both patients and healthcare teams may not benefit from the diverse strengths male nurses bring to the profession.

The implications of gender bias extend beyond the educational experiences of male nursing students; they can negatively affect patient care as well. Asante et al. (2023) highlight that patients may have preferences regarding the gender of their caregivers, which can influence their comfort levels and willingness to engage in care. This dynamic underscores the importance of understanding how gender perceptions impact not only the experiences of male nursing students but also the quality of care provided to patients. Additionally, research by Hosseini et al. (2022) indicates that male nursing students perceive various gender barriers within nursing curricula at Iranian universities. These barriers can hinder their educational experiences and professional development, leading to feelings of isolation and discouragement. Such perceptions can further perpetuate gender biases within the profession, ultimately affecting patient care dynamics and the overall healthcare environment. Exploring the perceptions of gender bias faced by male nursing students is crucial for identifying barriers to their professional development and addressing issues related to patient care.

Despite these challenges, male nursing students often demonstrate resilience and adaptability as they navigate gender biases. Many develop strategies to mitigate their experiences of bias, including building strong relationships with peers, seeking mentorship from male and female nursing professionals, and participating in advocacy efforts aimed at addressing stereotypes. Research by Lim et al. (2023) suggests that mentorship programs play a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging among male nursing students, as these programs provide a platform for



sharing experiences and receiving guidance on overcoming barriers. Additionally, these students often take pride in breaking stereotypes and serving as role models for future male nurses, underscoring the importance of representation in challenging societal norms.

Moreover, it is essential to recognize the role of nursing education in shaping the perceptions and experiences of male students. Curricula that emphasize inclusivity and promote diversity in clinical exposure can empower male nursing students to thrive in their chosen profession. For example, incorporating modules that address gender equity and patient preferences into nursing education can help students better understand and navigate biases in clinical settings. Institutions can also create policies that ensure equitable access to all clinical areas, enabling male students to gain well-rounded experiences and develop a comprehensive skill set. These steps not only support male nursing students but also contribute to a more inclusive healthcare environment that values diverse perspectives and strengths.

The broader societal perception of nursing as a gendered profession continues to influence the experiences of male nurses and nursing students. Media representations, cultural norms, and even historical narratives about nursing contribute to the reinforcement of stereotypes. Addressing these biases requires a multi-faceted approach that includes awareness campaigns, gender-sensitive training for healthcare teams, and public education initiatives. For example, showcasing male nurses as compassionate caregivers in media campaigns can challenge traditional narratives and encourage more men to pursue nursing careers. These efforts can contribute to a cultural shift that values caregiving as a universal attribute, rather than one tied to gender.

In exploring the perceptions of male nursing students, it is essential to consider the cultural context within which these biases occur. In many societies, caregiving roles are still heavily gendered, with men often discouraged from pursuing careers perceived as feminine. These cultural attitudes not only deter men from entering the nursing profession but also perpetuate biases against those who do. Educational institutions play a critical role in challenging these cultural norms by promoting nursing as a gender-neutral profession. Campaigns highlighting the importance of diversity in nursing, coupled with targeted recruitment efforts, can help attract more men to the field and gradually shift societal perceptions.

This study seeks to explore the lived experiences of male nursing students as they navigate gender bias in patient care. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for identifying specific areas where male nursing students encounter bias. By adopting a qualitative approach, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how these biases manifest and influence their education and practice. Conclusively, the findings will contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote gender inclusivity in nursing, ensuring a more equitable and supportive environment for future generations of healthcare providers.

### **Research Questions**

This study aims to examine how male nursing students at Perpetual Help College of Manila perceive and experience gender bias during patient care in OB wards. Specifically, this research seeks to address the following questions:



1. How do second year male nursing students perceive the presence of gender bias in OB Ward patient care?
2. What specific forms or situations of gender bias do male nursing students experience during their clinical rotations in OB Wards?
3. How does gender bias affect the responsibilities, learning experiences, and skill development of second year male nursing students in the OB ward setting?
4. How do male nursing students manage gender biases in their clinical rotation in OB ward, especially when patients prefer female nursing students?
5. What approaches or recommendations do male nursing students propose to reduce gender bias and promote inclusivity in the OB ward setting?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The reviewed literature highlights the ongoing issue of gender bias and the challenges male nurses face in a predominantly female-dominated profession. Both local and international studies reveal that while the number of male nurses is increasing, gender stereotypes continue to affect their professional experiences. In local studies, male nursing students often encounter biases such as being assigned physically demanding tasks or being excluded from caregiving roles, particularly in areas like obstetrics and gynecology, where traditional gender norms prevail (Caagbay et al., 2024; Flores et al., 2022). These biases not only limit the opportunities available to male nurses but also contribute to feelings of alienation and role strain. However, despite these challenges, many male nurses remain dedicated to the profession, driven by their passion for nursing and supported by coping strategies such as peer and family support (Averia et al., 2024).

International studies further emphasize these gender-related challenges, with male nurses often excluded from specific caregiving tasks or relegated to roles that align with traditional notions of masculinity, such as technical tasks or positions requiring physical strength (Porsen, 2022; Yip et al., 2021). Additionally, male nurses report a lack of role models, which can contribute to feelings of isolation and hinder their professional development. These studies suggest that a lack of male representation in nursing education and clinical practice may contribute to the persistence of gender stereotypes and biases.

The importance of gender sensitivity training and awareness programs within nursing institutions is a recurring theme across the literature. Interventions aimed at promoting gender equality, such as gender sensitivity workshops and mentorship programs, are recommended to help break down stereotypes and provide equal opportunities for male and female nursing students (Averia et al., 2024). Moreover, studies like those of Morales et al. (2022) and Alvarez (2022) advocate for reframing nursing as a profession that values contributions from both men and women, recognizing nursing as a scientific discipline rather than a gendered role.

In conclusion, the synthesis of the reviewed literature reveals that while gender bias remains a significant barrier in nursing, the growing number of male nurses demonstrates their perseverance and commitment to the profession. To address these challenges, it is essential to promote gender awareness, increase the presence of male role models in nursing education and practice, and create a more inclusive environment that supports the professional growth of all nurses, regardless of gender.



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study will employ a descriptive qualitative research design to explore the perceptions of gender bias faced by male nursing students during their clinical rotations at Perpetual Help College of Manila (PHCM). The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for this research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of personal experiences regarding gender bias in nursing. The use of open-ended questions will facilitate rich, detailed responses that capture the complexities of the participants' experiences. By drawing on existing literature, such as the findings from Hosseini et al. (2022), this research aims to contextualize the experiences of male nursing students within broader cultural and societal frameworks, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics in nursing education and practice. Thematic analysis will be employed to identify patterns and meanings within the data. This process involves familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, grouping related codes into themes, refining and defining themes, and developing a comprehensive narrative. Member checking will be used to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the findings. This approach provides a structured yet flexible framework for capturing participants' experiences in depth.

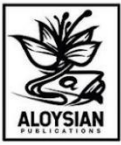
### Participants

The population for this study consists of Level II nursing students at Perpetual Help College of Manila (PHCM). These students are currently enrolled in the nursing program and are undergoing clinical rotation (RLE subjects), which makes them relevant to the topic of gender bias in patient care. The researchers aim to interview approximately 12 male nursing students to reach data saturation.

The inclusion of the study are PHCM second year male nursing students who experienced or have done their clinical rotation, which may reduce the transferability of findings to other schools or regions. It excludes the perspectives of female nursing students, clinical instructors, and patients, which could provide a more holistic understanding of gender bias in nursing. Other exclusions include students who have dropped out of the nursing program or those not currently enrolled in clinical rotations, as their experiences may differ from active students. Time constraints and participant availability may also limit the breadth of data collected. Furthermore, the study does not account for variations in cultural or institutional practices that might influence perceptions of gender bias across different nursing schools or regions. Since this is a qualitative study, the results are inherently subjective and context-specific, relying on participants' willingness to provide honest and detailed responses.

### Instruments of the Study

For this qualitative study, the primary instrument for data collection will be semi-structured interviews. These interviews will allow for in-depth exploration of the perceptions and experiences of male nursing students regarding gender bias in patient care. The interview guide will be developed to ensure that the questions align with the study's objectives while allowing



flexibility for participants to share their unique experiences. The following components will be included:

Interviews will be audio-recorded with the consent of participants, ensuring accurate data capture. In addition to audio recordings, field notes will be taken to capture any non-verbal cues and contextual information.

The interview guide will consist of open-ended questions aimed at understanding the following key themes:

- Perceptions of Gender Bias in OB Ward Patient Care
- Forms of Gender Bias in OB Ward
- Impact of Gender Bias on Clinical Learning Development
- Coping Strategies to Manage Gender Bias
- Recommendations for Addressing Gender Bias

Questions will be designed to encourage participants to reflect on their personal experiences and provide detailed responses and will be divided.

### **Procedure**

The study will conduct a one on one interview to explore male nursing students' perception with gender bias in patient care. The questions will concentrate on open-ended questions on how they view differences in treatment based on gender, as well as their interactions with patients and staff.

The data gathering procedure for this study will follow a structured and ethical process to ensure efficient participant recruitment, data collection, and analysis. Initially, permission to conduct the study will be obtained from the Dean of the Nursing Program at the institution. A formal letter of request outlining the purpose of the study, its significance, and the role of the participants will be sent to the Dean, seeking institutional approval. Once approval is granted, invitation letters will be distributed to second-year male nursing students in the PHCM program who have clinical exposure in the OB ward. These letters will include details about the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the importance of their input. Along with the invitation, participants will receive an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures. To ensure participants fully understand the study, a follow-up call or email will be made for any clarifications.

After receiving signed consent forms from the participants, interview schedules will be arranged at convenient times for them. The interviews will be conducted either in-person or online, depending on participant availability and preferences. Conducting interviews will take place in quiet, private locations to ensure participants can remain focused and to maintain confidentiality. This setting will help minimize distractions. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant, where they will be fully briefed on the purpose of the study, their right to voluntarily participate, and their ability to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. The interviews will be conducted individually, lasting approximately 25-30



minutes each. Interviews will be audio-recorded with the consent of the participants to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.

In this study, Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews. This approach is particularly suitable for identifying and interpreting common themes and patterns in participants' responses, which is essential for understanding the underlying meanings related to the research questions (Xu & Zammit, 2020).

Thematic analysis follows a systematic process that begins with familiarization with the data, where interview recordings are transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy (Prevett et al., 2021). The next step involves coding, in which meaningful segments of text are identified and categorized based on recurring concepts. These codes are then grouped into broader themes that capture key patterns emerging from the data. The themes are reviewed, refined, and interpreted in relation to the study's objectives, ensuring that the analysis remains relevant and meaningful (Fuchs, 2023).

To enhance the reliability of the findings, multiple researchers will be involved in coding and theme development. Any discrepancies in theme identification or interpretation will be resolved collaboratively. This approach strengthens the validity of the thematic analysis and ensures a rigorous and comprehensive examination of participants' experiences (Xu & Zammit, 2020; Prevett et al., 2021).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis, multiple researchers will be involved in coding and categorizing the data (Ganapathy et al., 2021). Any discrepancies in theme identification or interpretation will be discussed and resolved collaboratively. This approach enhances the consistency and accuracy of the findings, which is crucial in qualitative nursing research (Wirihana et al., 2020).

### **Data Analysis**

To enhance the credibility and validity of this study, data triangulation will be employed to explore male nursing students' perceptions of gender bias specifically in the OB ward. Since gender bias may manifest differently within this specialized setting, this triangulation approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of how these biases influence male nursing students during their clinical rotations in maternal and child healthcare.

The study will involve PHCM male nursing students from Levels II who have experienced clinical rotations in the OB ward, a traditionally female-dominated area where male nursing students may face unique challenges related to caregiving roles, particularly in maternal and child health.

Thematic analysis will be employed alongside data triangulation to explore the perceptions of second-year male nursing students regarding gender bias in OB ward patient care. Since gender bias may manifest differently within this specialized setting, this approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of how these biases influence male nursing students during their clinical rotations in maternal and child healthcare.



The study will involve PHCM second-year male nursing students who have experienced clinical rotations in the OB ward, a traditionally female-dominated area where male nursing students may face unique challenges related to caregiving roles, particularly in maternal and child health.

Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2022) framework, will be utilized to systematically identify, analyze, and interpret patterns within the qualitative data. This process involves six key phases:

1. Familiarization with the data – Reading and rereading the data to gain an initial understanding.
2. Generating initial codes – Identifying significant patterns and assigning codes.
3. Searching for themes – Grouping codes into broader themes.
4. Reviewing themes – Refining and ensuring themes accurately represent the data.
5. Defining and naming themes – Creating clear, descriptive names for each theme.
6. Producing the final report – Presenting findings with supporting evidence from participant responses.

Through this structured approach, key themes will be extracted to provide in-depth insights into participants' lived experiences, ensuring a systematic and transparent analysis of the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is widely recognized for its flexibility and rigor in qualitative research, allowing researchers to explore complex social phenomena such as gender bias (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

By utilizing thematic analysis, this research aims to uncover meaningful patterns in the participants' narratives, contributing to a deeper understanding of gender bias in the OB ward and its implications for male nursing students.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study adheres to ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of participants' rights and well-being throughout the research process.

**Informed Consent.** Participants will receive an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and the right to withdraw without penalty. They will be informed of the study's objectives and procedures.

**Confidentiality.** Personal information provided by participants will remain confidential. Identifying details such as names, contact information, and personal identifiers will not be included in the research findings.

**Anonymity.** Participants will be assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. No identifying information will be linked to the data presented in the research results.

**Data Security.** Audio recordings will be securely stored on encrypted devices and protected from unauthorized access. These recordings will only be used for the purpose of



transcription and analysis and will not be linked to the participant's real identity. The recordings will be deleted once the data has been transcribed and analyzed.

**Respect for Participants' Rights.** Participants can withdraw at any time without consequence. The research team will respect their autonomy, and interviews will be conducted in a manner that ensures privacy and comfort.

**Non-maleficence.** The study will avoid causing harm or distress. Participants may skip any uncomfortable questions and withdraw at any time without repercussions.

**Beneficence.** The research aims to provide insights into gender bias, benefiting nursing education and clinical practices by promoting inclusivity for male nursing students.

**Cultural Sensitivity.** The study will respect Filipino cultural values and gender norms, ensuring participants' experiences and perspectives are acknowledged and valued.

## RESULTS

The data of the study was analyzed according to the specific objectives (SOPs) and further categorized into themes for a more comprehensive discussion. The interpretations provide deeper insight into the implications of gender bias on the learning experience, skill development, and professional growth of male nursing students.

### SOP 1: Perception of Gender Bias in OB Ward Care

#### Theme: Awareness and Recognition of Gender Bias

Perceived gender bias varied among participants. Some reported that some patients showed discomfort when male students assisted in OB procedures. Others noted that certain OB tasks were more frequently delegated to female students.

Participant Response
<i>"Napansin ko lang na mas comfortable yung mga patient 'pag babae yung nag ha-handle sa patients." (I just noticed that patients feel more comfortable when a female handles them.) - P2</i>
<i>"Kapag may procedure, mas madalas na ibinibigay sa babae kasi parang mas expected na sila ang gagawa ng OB tasks." (During procedures, tasks are often given to female students because it is expected that they handle OB tasks.) - P5</i>
<i>"Yung sa OB ward po kasi, karaniwang nararanasan kasi, syempre po, babae po yung patient. So, mas prefer po nila na babae rin po yung gagawa sa kanila" (In the OB ward, what we usually experience is that, since the patients are women, they naturally prefer to be cared for by female staff as well.) - P6</i>
<i>"So, yun nga siguro dun ko nape-perceive yung gender biased sa OB Ward kasi parang nagkakaroon ng discrimination na 'pag sa lalaki nagkakaroon ng pagka-ilang then si patient</i>

*mas comfortable sa babae rin*" (So that's where I perceive the gender bias in the OB ward, because it feels like there is a form of discrimination when the patient becomes hesitant with male students, and the patient feels more comfortable with female caregivers.) - P10

*"Meron po one time na tumanggi sa care ko kasi nga lalaki daw po ako at medyo nahihiya sila."* (There was one time, the patient refused my care because I'm a male and the patient is shy about it) - P12

## SOP 2: Forms and Situations of Gender Bias

### Theme: Task Assignments Based on Gender

Some participants indicated they were frequently tasked with assignments that were physically demanding, while intimate procedures had them excluded either through patient preference.

#### Participant Response

*"Lagi akong inaatasan sa mga physical tasks tulad ng pagbuhat ng pasyente o pag-aayos ng gamit, pero bihirang makasama sa actual na procedure."* (I am always assigned to physical tasks like lifting patients or preparing equipment, but I rarely get to participate in actual procedures.) - P3

*"Yung scenario kase is may babae sa OB Ward, dahil iisa lang yung room nandudun kami tapos pinaalis kami then pinaiwan dun is yung mga babae"*" (The scenario was that there was a female patient in the OB ward, and since there was only one room, we were asked to leave, leaving only the female staff with her.) - P9

*"Meron po dun naranasan ko na pag gagawa ng procedure tulad nga po nung nagpa-catheter one time is pina-palitan po ng babae instead na lalaki po sana ang magkakabit."* (I experienced a situation during a procedure, like when I was about to insert a catheter once, they replaced me with a female nurse instead of letting me do it) - P2

*"Ayaw magpakuha ng vital signs yung pasyente. Nahihiya siya siguro dahil dalaga pa at lalaki ako. Sinabi ko kay Ma'am, kaya pinalitan na lang ako ng ibang pasyente."* (The patient refused to have her vital signs taken. She seemed shy, maybe because she was young and I'm a male. I informed Ma'am, and I was reassigned to another patient.) - P5

*"Siguro po that time na mag change ng diaper sa mother po kasi nga bagong tahi lang sya tapos instead na ako po yung mag change ng diaper kasi nga po sakin siya naka assigned na patient is pinalitan po sya ng female student nurse na ka batch ko din po."* (There was a time when I was assigned to change the diaper of a mother who had just undergone suturing. Instead of me doing it, she was reassigned to a female student nurse who was in the same

batch as I was.) - P12

*"tulad nung pag-aasikaso ng oxygen, yung maglalagay po sa cart at itutulak kasi mabigat po 'yun. Syempre, lalaki po yung kailangan gumawa nun."* (like handling oxygen tanks, placing them on the cart and pushing them because they're heavy. Naturally, a male is expected to do that kind of task.) - P6

### SOP 3: Impact on Learning and Skill Development

#### Theme: Limited Clinical Exposure

Participants reported limited exposure to intimate OB procedures and expressed regrets over missed learning opportunities.

Participant Response
<i>"Medyo may gap sa learning kasi syempre may mga procedure na di ako yung nakakagawa, like more on observation lang.."</i> (There is a learning gap since some procedures I only get to observe and don't perform.) - P12
<i>"Nanghihinayang po kasi sayang yung opportunity na makagawa ng task tulad ng perineal care."</i> (There is a sense of regret, as it feels like a missed opportunity to gain experience in tasks such as perineal care.) - P2
<i>"Nalilimit po kasi yung learning, kasi nga may gender bias. Hindi po lahat natututunan kasi minsan po hindi po ako nakaka-assist sa patient, kasi nga mas prefer po nila yung babae."</i> (Learning is limited because of gender bias. I can't assist some patients since they prefer female student nurses) - P6
<i>"Parang syempre dahil dun sa gender bias, mala-lack of knowledge, mala-lack of experience yung nursing student na lalaki"</i> (Because of gender bias, male nursing students tend to have less knowledge and experience) - P8
<i>"I think meron po siyang negative impact kasi. May mga parts po sa clinical. clinical experience mo na mahihinder po due to gender bias."</i> (I think gender bias has a negative impact because some parts of the clinical experience get hindered.) - P3
<i>"May experience na sana ako ng catheter insertion. Tapos nung, parang nung tinanong kasi yung pasyente, sabi, 'Mam, okay lang ba may mag-observe?' Tapos tumingin yung pasyente sa akin. Hindi siya makasagot. Tapos ayun na, automatic na yun. dalawa na kami ni Justin lumabas. Tapos, sila na lang nandun. Tapos nagawa naman yung procedure. Kaya yun, sayang yun, dahil lang sa gender bias."</i> (I was supposed to gain experience in catheter insertion, but when the patient was asked about an observer, she looked at me and didn't respond. Justin and I stepped out, and the procedure continued without us. The opportunity was lost because of gender bias.) - P5



*“kapag mag-peperineal care ka, ayaw ng patient na makita mo yun or ayaw nila na manood ka kasi nga nahihiya sila. It affects the way you acquire knowledge and limits it”* (When performing perineal care, patients often don’t want you to watch or observe because they feel shy. This can affect how you acquire knowledge and limit your learning) - P7

#### SOP 4: Strategies to Manage Gender Bias

##### Theme: Coping Mechanisms

Participants described coping strategies such as asking for consent carefully, coordinating with female classmates, and volunteering more actively.

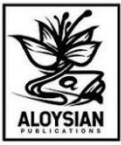
Participant Response
<i>“Always ask consent sa patient kung hawakan mo sila... as other gender or opposite gender, kailangan mo talaga magpaalam at maging gentle kasi naihihiya sila. And always, make your patient comfortable.”</i> (Always get the patient’s consent before touching them, especially if they are of the opposite gender, and be gentle. Always make your patient comfortable.) - P1
<i>“Mas nag fo-focus ako sa skills at knowledge ko para ipakita na kaya kong gawin yung trabaho nang tama. Pangalawa, nagiging proactive ako halimbawa, kapag may procedures na kailangan gawin, ako na mismo nagvo-volunteer para ipakita na confident ako.”</i> (I focus more on my skills and knowledge to show that I can do the job properly. Secondly, I become proactive. For example, when there are procedures that need to be done, I volunteer myself to demonstrate that I am confident) - P2
<i>“ine-explain ko po sa kanila nang maayos yung gagawin ko, step by step, para maging comfortable sila sa akin at hindi sila makaramdam ng discomfort.”</i> (I explain clearly, step by step, what I’m going to do so they feel comfortable and don’t experience discomfort.) - P6
<i>“di ko na lang rin iniisip, para di ka mag-overthink, para di rin maapektuhan yung confidence mo and yung performance mo. Ano lang rin, hingang malalim lang rin.”</i> (When I experience gender bias, I just take a deep breath and try not to overthink it so it doesn’t affect my confidence or performance) - P7
<i>“Mga strategies na ginagawa ko pag naduty ako ulit sa OB ward is siguro ipapakita ko sa mga kapwa nurses o student nurse na kahit mapa lalaki man i can excel kahit sa OB ward man yan kumbaga hindi ito for the specific female student lang”</i> (My strategy in the OB ward is to show fellow nurses and student nurses that even as a male, I can excel in this area, it’s not just for female students.) - P10
<i>“Yung strategies ko parang naging understanding na lang ako and lagi na lang ako parang, natutong humingi ng tulong sa mga co-dutymates in case na may mga patients nga na ayaw maki-cooperate due to my gender.”</i> (My strategy is to be understanding and always ask for help from my co-dutymates when patients refuse to cooperate because of my gender.) - P11

**SOP 5: Recommendations**

**Theme: Encouraging Inclusive Practices**

Participants suggested patient orientations and standardized guidelines to ensure equal treatment and inclusion of male nursing students in the OB ward.

<b>Participant Response</b>
<p><i>"Mas magiging maayos siguro kung may orientation muna ang pasyente para malaman nila na parte ng training namin ang exposure sa OB cases, at kaya rin naming ibigay yung same level of care."</i> (It would be better if patients received an orientation explaining that exposure to OB cases is part of our training, and that we are capable of providing the same level of care.) - P2</p>
<p><i>"Yung patient education po at orientation. Sasabihin ko po sa patient na parehas lang naman po ang training at experience ng mga lalaki at babaeng student nurses. Dapat maintindihan nila na same lang po ang practices at experiences ng mga students, kaya hindi po sila dapat matakot kung lalaki ang gagawa ng care sa kanila.."</i> (For the patient education and orientation, I will explain to the patient that male and female student nurses have the same training and experience. They should understand that the practices and experiences of the students are equal, so they don't need to be afraid if a male student nurse provides their care) - P6</p>
<p><i>"Pwede ring mag-set ng policies na klarong nag-i-include ng male students sa lahat ng procedures. At syempre, respect kung alam ng lahat na may equal role tayo bilang nursing students, mas magiging open yung environment."</i> (Policies can ensure male students are included in all procedures, and respecting our equal role as nursing students creates a more open environment.) - P2</p>
<p><i>"Mag health teaching rin sa mga patient. Explain to them that we're doing this without any malice or anything."</i> (Do health teaching for the patients. Explain to them that we're doing this without any malice or ill intent.) - P7</p>
<p><i>"Sa OB, siguro mas mabuti kung magkaroon ng seminar tungkol sa gender bias para maipaliwanag sa mga pasyente na okay lang na lalaki ang mag-aasikaso sa kanila. Para mawala yung mindset na 'ay lalaki siya, ayoko sa kanya,' at mabigyan sila ng kaalaman na professional ang ginagawa ng male nurses at walang masamang intensyon."</i> (In the OB ward, it would help to have a seminar on gender bias to explain to patients that it's okay for male nursing students to provide care. This can address misconceptions, show that male nursing students are professional, and ensure that we have no ill intentions) - P8</p>



## DISCUSSION

### **SOP 1: PERCEPTION OF GENDER BIAS IN OB WARD PATIENT CARE THEME: AWARENESS AND RECOGNITION OF GENDER BIAS**

The male nursing students experienced varying levels of perceived gender bias inside the OB ward. Some say that gender bias is not so much nowadays, given that everyone is increasingly aware of gender equality in healthcare; others still feel awkwardness and resistance from their patients.

The first response indicates that some students perceive little or no gender bias in practice because, perhaps, more inclusive practices have started. On the contrary, other respondents indicate that patients still feel uncomfortable with male nurses conducting procedures involving intimacy. It is the discomfort of the patient that reinstates traditional gender stereotypes whereby OB care is assumed to be performed by female nurses.

Also, the observation that patients feel awkward when assisted by male nurses reflects the societal understanding that OB-related procedures should, in fact, mostly be performed only by female healthcare providers. The discomfort felt by patients affects how male students engage in patient care and may further cause limitations to their participation in OB-related activities, thus perpetuating stereotypes in the profession.

Though healthcare is slowly including gender perspectives, the respondents showed that gender bias still colors the experiences of male nursing students, hindering the performance of the skills required for OB ward patient care.

### **SOP 2: FORMS AND SITUATIONS OF GENDER BIAS IN CLINICAL ROTATIONS THEME: TASK ASSIGNMENTS BASED ON GENDER**

Responses revealed that male nursing students frequently experience gender bias in task assignments. Instead of being given the opportunity like the rest to perform the intimate patient care procedure, they are often put into roles that require physical strength, lifting patients, preparing equipment, or working on logistical tasks.

According to one participant, their clinical instructor (CI) always requested that any specific procedures be performed by female students. The end result was that students like him were never exposed to such critical learning. This practice is an institutionally biased assumption that female students are more suitable for OB care, thus promoting traditional gender roles in nursing education.

This statement is also about assigning male students to non-caregiving roles, which reiterates a stereotype that male nurses are assistive rather than primary caregivers. With continuity of this practice, male nursing students may find themselves graduating with inadequate exposure to significant OB skill areas, leading to insufficient competence in maternal and newborn care in the future.

That patient prefers female nurses because it further limits male students' involvement in OB procedures. With OB care being sensitive and intimate, patients would feel more



comfortable with females. This would also be understandable, but obviously ends in unequal learning experiences for male students.

Clinical training environments should be proactive in identifying these biases and working towards more gender-neutral task assignments and supportive climate conditioning so that male nursing students can also benefit fully from clinical exposure.

### **SOP 3: IMPACT ON RESPONSIBILITIES, LEARNING, AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT** **THEME: LIMITED CLINICAL EXPOSURE AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

The most basic negative effect of the gender bias on male nursing students is that it limits the males' clinical exposure to important nursing procedures. A lot of the times, these are denied for them because of the discomfort of the patients and institutional bias. As a result, the male students have been denied the opportunity to perform intimate tasks, such as perineal care and assisting in deliveries.

The hesitation reflected in the first response is indicative of a system-wide problem where males are either excluded from playing or do not feel comfortable asserting their role in OB care due to fears of being considered inappropriate. It certainly restricts their ability to become competent in taking maternal care procedures, thus causing deficits in their education in nursing.

The loss of opportunity was echoed by another participant who expressed disappointment at being denied opportunities to perform key OBs. That hints at the realization within male students that these experiences are vital but cannot be gained completely and without outside constraints. All that without the proper exposure leads to a lack of confidence and competence with handling OB cases in practice for male nursing students.

These areas, when restricted, create an uneven playing field in nursing education, with female students enjoying a larger degree of hands-on experience in OB care than their male counterparts. Hence, institutions should develop strategies helpful in implementing policies ensuring that all clinical procedures do not vary on the basis of gender.

### **SOP 4: STRATEGIES TO MANAGE GENDER BIAS** **THEME: COPING MECHANISMS AND ADAPTATION**

Different tactics are utilized by male nursing students when confronted with situations of gender bias in the area of OB care. The most common is to respect patient preferences and, before performing any procedure, request some level of consent from the patient. This not only guarantees patient comfort and reassurance but also allows male students to participate more often in the performance of patient care.

Another option is that male students must be seen to readily volunteer for procedures and actually perform them. This is especially relevant if they are being relatively skillful at it. Thus, they imbue the notion of being valid, thus challenging the stereotype that male students are not competent in OB nursing.



Some participants referred to their collaboration with their female colleagues to better assist patients with their comfort. This collaboration accounts not only for creating a better learning environment but also for establishing a form of trust from male students toward their patients.

Such strategies, while useful, cannot eliminate the obstacles faced by male nursing students altogether. It is the systemic changes in policies and education that would ensure equal training opportunities are provided to male students in the area of OB care.

#### **SOP 5: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING GENDER BIAS THEME: ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES AND FAIR OPPORTUNITIES**

Male nursing students expressed the importance of creating a more inclusive environment to reduce gender bias. They suggested conducting seminars and orientations that promote awareness about the contributions of male nurses, particularly in obstetric care, to help inform both patients and healthcare teams. Additionally, normalizing the presence of male students in OB settings was seen as a helpful step. This may involve adopting inclusive approaches in both academic and clinical training. Encouraging a more balanced representation of male nurses in OB/GYN areas was also mentioned as a way to gradually shift public perception and lessen gender-related barriers. Promoting diversity in maternal healthcare environments may lead to a fairer and more supportive learning experience for all nursing students.

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