

## **Some aspects of dental care for patients practicing Islam**

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Over the past few years the amount of students from Muslim countries who are studying in Kharkov high schools has highly increased. While providing medical care employees of the Department of Therapeutic Dentistry of Kharkov National Medical University are often face the specialties conditioned by the differences of religion. More often those religious issues arise when treating students practicing Islam.

In daily practice teaching staff of our department is guided by fundamental principles of medical ethics such as: respect for patient's autonomy, confidentiality, desire to act for the benefit of the patient, do not harm, fair treatment for the patient (A course in Medical Ethics at ASRAM, Andhra Pradesh, India December 2007). However, qualified care is impossible without taking into account national, cultural and religious features of the patients. According to Sharia principles a woman is allowed to consult a male doctor and vice versa only under certain circumstances. Woman is the most preferred doctor for a female patient. But if there is a necessity for a female patient to be examined by a male doctor he, if possible, should not touch her. And we pay respect to all of these rules in our work.

We often face with requests of our patients (woman) such as discuss the plan and amount of planned dental treatment with their husbands or with the desire of the patient (woman) to receive dental care in the presence of husband or brother only, which, to some extent, violates the principles of confidentiality and autonomy of the patient. However, since act on behalf of the patient is foreground we are to consider to what extent our diagnostic actions and planned medical care will correspond with religious norms and beliefs of our patients.

We know a lot of cultural traditions of Muslim patients and we are ready to respect their beliefs. We believe establishment of delicate relations between doctor and patient not only significantly increases the quality of care but also allows us to enhance our knowledge in the field of very relevant direction – the Islamic medical ethics.