

# Most female physicians have faced sexist patient comments

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(HealthDay)—Most female physicians have been sexually harassed by

patients at some point in their careers, according to a blog post published in *Medical Economics*.

Rebekah Bernard, M.D., a [family physician](#) at Gulf Coast Direct Primary Care in Fort Myers, Florida, recounted the experience of a fellow female physician. During a phone call to review lab results with a male patient, the physician was blindsided when the patient said, "You know, if I wasn't married, we would be together." Unsure how to respond, she ignored the comment and continued speaking about the lab results.

It is estimated that the majority of female physicians—52 percent in one study and 75 percent in another—have been sexually harassed by a patient, which can negatively impact the [physician](#)-patient relationship and make it harder to provide the best quality of care. Female physicians tend to stay silent in the face of these comments out of embarrassment, lack of preparation, uncertainty about how to respond, or concern about how the response will be received.

Clinical psychologist Steven Cohen, Ph.D., recommends acknowledging the comment and then continuing the clinical conversation. "Practice how you will feel in the moment, visualizing yourself in control of the situation," Cohen said in the blog post.

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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