

RESOLUTION

Subject: Standardizing Attire in Procedural Clerkship Training to Promote Cultural and Religious Inclusivity for Medical School Students

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Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, medical students with headwear and attire obligations often are unprepared for procedural-based clerkships due to a lack of standardized scrubbing and personal protective equipment (PPE) training with educators that maintains their cultural or religious practices¹; and

WHEREAS, the current literature shows that head coverings that extend and are pinned to the V-neck region of scrub tops and are covered by orthopedic hoods without their plastic shield can be worn without sacrificing sterility, the safety of the patients, or the safety of providers with proper education^{1,3}; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky medical students are from diverse backgrounds and represent the many ethnicities, religions, and cultures of the people of Kentucky⁶; and

WHEREAS, current evidence shows that lack of access to proper headwear and training discourages medical students from pursuing surgical specialties and contributes to structural discrimination in medicine^{4,5}; and

WHEREAS, the First Amendment, Civil Rights Act of 1964, and KMA policy support employer accommodations for the practice of religion through headwear and attire to ensure practice settings are inclusive of all physicians and trainees; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association has acknowledged that failing to provide policies supporting students with natural hairstyles and cultural headwear is a form of racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination²; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA advocate all medical educational institutes in Kentucky to provide adequate personal protective equipment for medical students and residents during clinical rotations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA advocate all medical educational institutions in Kentucky to provide disposable head coverings that comply with religious and cultural practices and sterility.

References:

1. Abdelwahab, R., Aden, A., Bearden, B., Sada, A., & Bostwick, J. M. (2021). Surgical Scrubbing and Attire in the Operating Room and ICU: A Multicultural Guide. *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*, 233(2), 321–327. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2021.05.005>
2. American Medical Association. (2022). Combating Natural Hair and Cultural Headwear Discrimination in Medicine and Medical Professionalism H-65.949. *American Medical Association*. <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/cultural%20headwear?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-H-65.949.xml>
3. Cowperthwaite, L. and Holm, R.L. (2015), Guideline Implementation: Surgical Attire. *AORN Journal*, 101: 188-197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aorn.2014.12.003>
4. Khatun, R., Saleh, Z., Adnan, S., Boukerche, F., & Cooper, A. Covered, but Not Sterile: Reflections on Being a Hijabi in Medicine and Surgery. *Annals of Surgery*, 273(3):p e83-e84, March 2021. | DOI: 10.1097/SLA.0000000000004655
5. Malik, A., Qureshi, H., Abdul-Razakq, H., Yaqoob, Z., Javaid, F. Z., Esmail, F., Wiley, E., & Latif, A. (2019). 'I decided not to go into surgery due to dress code': a cross-sectional study within the UK investigating experiences of female Muslim medical health professionals on bare below the elbows (BBE) policy and wearing headscarves (hijabs) in theatre. *BMJ open*, 9(3), e019954. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-019954>
6. University of Kentucky College of Medicine. (2024). Diversity Demographics. *University of Kentucky College of Medicine*. <https://medicine.uky.edu/sites/diversity/demographics>

RELEVANT AMA, AMA-MSS AND POLICY

H-65.944 Providing Culturally and Religiously Sensitive Attire Options at Hospitals for Patients and Employees

Our American Medical Association supports the provision of safe, culturally, and religiously sensitive operating room scrubs and hospital attire options for both patients and employees. [Res. 005, A-23]

H-65.949 Combating Natural Hair and Cultural Headwear Discrimination in Medicine and Medical Professionalism

Our AMA: (1) recognizes that discrimination against natural hair/hairstyles and cultural headwear is a form of racial, ethnic and/or religious discrimination; (2) opposes discrimination against individuals based on their hair or cultural headwear in health care settings; (3) acknowledges the acceptance of natural hair/hairstyles and cultural headwear as crucial to professionalism in the standards for the health care workplace; (4) encourages medical schools, residency and fellowship programs, and medical employers to create policies to oppose discrimination based on hairstyle and cultural headwear in the interview process, medical education, and the workplace; and (5) encourages healthcare institutions to provide adequate protective equipment in accordance with appropriate patient safety for healthcare workers with natural hair/hairstyles or cultural headwear. [Res. 006, A-22]