

BLIND JUDGMENT AT FIRST SIGHT: TRUSTING PHYSICIANS FROM THEIR ATTIRE

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ABSTRACT

Although physician appearance has been a topic of discussion in the medical literature for many years, less research has been performed on this topic from a service marketing point of view by considering patients as “consumers” and physicians as their “service providers”. The present study extends existing literature to a Middle Eastern context and focuses on investigating the possible effects of cultural artifacts on patient preferences in Iran. Research was conducted in the waiting room of a private medical laboratory located in the north center of Tehran and data collected using a patient-completed survey. Five hundred patients viewed photographs of either a young or old doctor in a variety of outfits before responding. Results indicate preference for formal attire, with the majority of respondents choosing professional dress consisting of a white coat with necktie. The paper closes with discussion of the results, managerial implications, and directions for further research.

References Available on Request.