

The SOGC responds publicly to the coroner's report on Joyce Echaquan's death

October 19, 2021

As a women's health organization, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) is saddened by the conclusions of the coroner's report, which states that the racism and prejudice to which the Atikamekw woman was subjected to were contributing factors in her death.

We strongly believe that all women are entitled to respectful health care, and that prejudices, discrimination, and racism are unacceptable in the health care system and should not occur. As women's health practitioners, Indigenous physicians, mothers, and daughters, we can't deny that we have seen racism at play in our health care system. The health system is not always a safe experience for racialized people. We acknowledge work needs to be done to ensure equitable health care for all and that work starts with each one of us. The road to cultural safety starts with cultural humility. SOGC members will continue to reflect on this tragic event, as it relates to our own work and the treatment of our patients.

In June, the SOGC Board voted to recognize and support *Joyce's Principle* and has committed itself to a course of action to eliminate systemic racism as it pertains to women's health care. The SOGC has made implicit bias training mandatory for its staff and board members and encourages all SOGC members to undertake unconscious bias training. The Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee and the Indigenous Women's Health Committee will advise the SOGC on further courses of action to address systemic racism in our health care system. SOGC is committed to board representation that reflects its members and the Canadian population.

For more information, please consult our [website](#).