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Letter to Editor

Healthy Women Advancing Health Culture and Advocating One Health: From Family to Global Society

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Women play an irreplaceable role in advancing One Health, an approach that emphasizes the interconnection between human health, animal health and environmental well-being^{1,2}. Their impact starts within the family and extends to the global community, where they shape behaviors, values and norms related to health³. This prominent role is rooted in their exceptional ability to nurture, educate and lead within families and communities⁴. However, for women to fully realize this potential, they need cultural, social and legal support to enable them to participate effectively and sustainably in this domain.

Women are recognized as a constant source of love and kindness, whose presence brings emotional balance and peace to families and communities. By conveying positive emotions and providing emotional support, they not only contribute to individual mental health but also play a vital role in promoting health culture within society⁵.

Women's role in advancing health culture has several fundamental dimensions. First, as primary educators within families, they serve as the first health teachers for children. By teaching healthy eating habits, personal hygiene and disease prevention, they nurture generations that are conscious and responsible about their health. This educational role impacts not only physical health but also mental and social well-being⁶.

In addition, through participation in social and cultural activities, women can influence societal attitudes and beliefs. By modeling healthy behaviors, they can help shift social norms. For example, women who actively engage in sports

and physical activities can serve as positive role models for other community members, challenging and changing negative cultural perceptions in this regard^{7,8}.

Their endless love and kindness transform them into One Health advocates, whether in their roles as mothers, wives or active members of society. Their unique ability to influence social norms and health behaviors positions them as vital advocates for One Health, supporting human, animal and environmental health.

Moreover, women in many societies face greater social and cultural expectations than men. These expectations-especially when women are required to juggle multiple roles, such as being a mother, wife, employee and social activist-result in physical and psychological pressures. These pressures lower their quality of life and jeopardize their physical and mental health, ultimately limiting their ability to contribute effectively to One Health initiatives. Additionally, many cultural and social limitations prevent women from fully benefiting from their health, educational and social rights. These limitations include restricted access to healthcare services, workplace discrimination and inadequate legal support. Such challenges directly affect women's health and, by extension, influence the health of humans, animals and the environment⁹.

To address these issues, cultural reforms are essential within families and communities. These reforms must challenge and change negative stereotypes about women, while creating an environment that supports their empowerment. Governments

should also play an active role by implementing educational programs and enacting supportive laws, ensuring women can participate freely and healthily in health promotion efforts¹⁰. Key actions include:

- Public education to change negative cultural attitudes toward women.
- Legislative measures to guarantee women's rights in health, social and economic spheres.
- Improving access to healthcare and mental health support to alleviate physical and psychological pressures.

These changes are crucial because they allow women to fully realize their potential as advocates for cultural transformation. By empowering women to participate in public life without discrimination or limitations, societies can promote health and well-being and achieve One Health goals. Once the foundations of health culture are firmly established, healthy women can play a much more effective role in strengthening One Health. As mothers, they raise health-conscious generations that contribute to enhancing the One Health ecosystem-generations that actively engage in protecting the environment, preventing zoonotic diseases and managing natural resources sustainably.

Additionally, women can serve as health promoters in schools and local communities, helping to improve the quality of life and public health by sharing health knowledge and raising awareness. Women can also act as health consultants in workplaces, contributing to the creation of healthy work environments and enhancing employee well-being¹¹. On a societal level, women can lead social change in areas such as improving public health, protecting the environment and promoting healthy lifestyles, such as water conservation, sustainable agriculture and improving environmental quality. By creating social networks and support groups, they can effectively transmit health information and contribute to raising public awareness. This role is particularly important in local communities, where informal communication strongly influences social norms. Their unique leadership perspectives and abilities are essential for solving complex global issues such as climate change, emerging diseases and food security¹².

To achieve this vision, international organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO must formally recognize and support the role of women in One Health. These organizations must actively:

- Develop supportive policies to advance women's health and social rights.
- Design educational and empowerment programs to prepare women for leadership in health and environmental sectors.

Facilitate women's participation in health and environmental policy-making and decision-making processes, ensuring their voices are heard at both national and global levels.

Such international support is essential for enabling women to effectively contribute to One Health initiatives. By recognizing and reinforcing their role, global organizations can harness women's potential as One Health advocates, promoting a culture of change and progress worldwide.

Ultimately, to achieve One Health goals and elevate global health culture, the role of women as One Health advocates must be given serious and effective attention. However, for women to fully embrace this role, cultural and social barriers must be removed and their rights must be ensured through legal frameworks and supportive policies. This cultural transformation requires reforms, legal support and strategic initiatives by international organizations.

Only by adopting this comprehensive approach can societies fully benefit from women's empowerment in advancing One Health, ensuring a sustainable and healthy future for humans, animals and the environment. This future will be built on the foundation of empowered women who shape health cultures, lead social initiatives and advocate for the well-being of all living systems, both globally and locally.

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