

Fulbright Scholar promotes women in health leadership

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Mehr Manzoor, a Tulane doctoral student and Fulbright scholar, is looking into why women have fewer leadership roles, and working to correct the imbalance. She is pictured here at the World Health Assembly in Geneva earlier this year. (Photo from Mehr Manzoor)

According to statistics from the Women in Global Health (WGH) organization, women make up the majority of healthcare workers worldwide. However, the number of women in health leadership positions is only 25 percent.

Mehr Manzoor, a Tulane doctoral student and Fulbright scholar, is looking into why women have fewer leadership roles, and working to correct the imbalance.

A native of Pakistan, Manzoor studies in the Global Health Management and Policy Department in the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. She is also research director for WGH.

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Manzoor uses an intersectional approach to understand the barriers women face in achieving leadership positions, such as cultural or religious practices, gender biases and stereotypes, and situations where women leaders are judged differently than men.

In her research, she began “to look at how women’s experiences have circumscribed them to the domestic affairs of life historically and how that historic perspective had shaped cultures.” Even though women have moved into leadership positions in Europe and developed countries, they “haven’t made much progress in certain economies” like countries in the global south, she said. Manzoor believes it is crucial to include diverse voices in this research.

Manzoor attended the 70th World Health Assembly in Geneva this year; later she received the Changemaker Catalyst Award from the Phyllis M. Taylor Center for Social Innovation and Design Thinking at Tulane for her participation.

At a WGH event called “Heroines of Health” which was held before the World Health Assembly, Manzoor served as a roundtable co-moderator. Here she had the opportunity to lead a discussion that included World Health Organization representatives.

Manzoor is also part of a WGH team that has collaborated with faculty from John Hopkins University and Jhpiego, that university’s nonprofit health affiliate, to bring leadership training to nurse-midwives in Tanzania.

She is also a co-editor on a forthcoming Women in Global Health book.