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**General practitioners' moral views and dealing with troubling issues of gender and culture in the consultation room: A contribution from the Netherlands****Sawitri Saharso**

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This paper discusses Dutch general practitioners (GPs) responses to health issues related to so-called harmful traditional practices (HTPs). HTPs are commonly understood as cultural traditions of gender inequality that harm the rights and well-being of women (stemming) from the global South (UN 1995). We suspected that with the increasing diversification of the Dutch population GPs would increasingly meet with health issues related to HTPs in their consultation room. They may meet with female patients who request medical interventions related to HTPs, like hymen 'repair', or they may find that HTPs like forced marriage and other restrictions of autonomy are at the root of the medical symptom, like depression. GPs have a unique position in health care that makes them well positioned to help women with HTP related health issues. They normally have a long-lasting personal relationship with their patients and are familiar with their family and social situation. Patients may disclose issues to GPs that otherwise would remain unnamed and GPs can assist the patient as guide and confidential advisor when making choices. Yet, we know very little what HTP related health issues GPs actually encounter in their consultation room. Moreover, we suspected that GPs experience moral dilemmas regarding HTPs and medical intervention. Moreover, in encounters with HTP related health issues GPs principles may become compromised. A request for a virginity 'test', for example, would appear to infringe on women's sexual autonomy, there is no medical need, the examination is harming bodily integrity and it is deceit. Based on in-depth interviews with fourteen GPs in the Netherlands, we discuss what kind of so-called harmful cultural practices (HCP) GPs encounter in their consultation room, whether they experience moral conflicts (personal and professional) and how they balance personal and bioethical principles to reach a decision on how to act.

**Recent Publications**

1. Sloom J, Saharso S and Keuzenkamp S (2018) Ethnic minority health and employment: ethnic differences in the protective effect of close social ties. *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 1-20.
2. Sloom J, Keuzenkamp S and Saharso S (2018) Narratives of meaningful endurance—how migrant women escape the vicious cycle between health problems and unemployment. *Comparative migration studies* 6(1):21.
3. Sloom J, Keuzenkamp S and Saharso S (2017) The mechanisms behind the formation of a strong Sense of Coherence (SOC): The role of migration and integration. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 58(6):571-580.
4. Bergen D D Van and Saharso S (2016) Suicidality of young ethnic minority women with an immigrant background: The role of autonomy. *European journal of women's studies*, 23(3):297-311. .

**Biography**

Sawitri Saharso is a Professor of Citizenship and Moral Diversity at the University of Humanistic Studies and VU Amsterdam. She is interested in questions of gender, migration, moral diversity and health. She was a visiting professor of Democracy and Difference in Europe at The University of Vienna, Austria and Editor-In-Chief of *Comparative Migration Studies*.

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