

Health Care & Family Planning in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Medical student Hajar Kadivar traveled to the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), where she worked for three weeks in the Community Medicine Department and three weeks in the Gynecology Department at Martyr Faghihi Hospital.

The hospital was established by Shiraz Municipality in 1943 for medical care, and became affiliated with Shiraz Medical School in 1949. It has a 22 bed inpatient gynecology ward with an outpatient gynecology clinic.

(To access Hajar's complete report on her experiences in Iran, click [here](#).)

Hajar's three weeks in the community medicine department consisted of a week of attending classes in order to learn more about the Primary Health Care System of the IRI, one week of performing comparative research on family planning and health care between the IRI and the US, along with visiting villages in the outskirts of Shiraz, and one week of visiting the Health House and the Rural Health Clinic in the village of Sultan Abad. Her three weeks in the gynecology department in Martyr Faghihi Hospital consisted of one week of inpatient where she attended morning conference and rounded on the patients, and two weeks of working in the outpatient gynecology clinic.

While the age of marriage for Iranian women is rising and maternal mortality is decreasing, many of Hajar's older female patients had been married from the age of 13 and had experienced six or more pregnancies. In Iran, a man can divorce his wife if she is infertile or refuses to have children. By law, women are not supposed to use birth control without the permission of their husbands. Because fertility is so important in Iranian culture and law, newly married women often refuse to use any birth control other than traditional methods for fear that modern methods will adversely affect their future fertility.

