309968 - Is Laser Hair Removal Haram?

the question

I am a nurse and I have been transferred to work in a laser hair removal clinic. This includes the entire body, including the private parts. Thus every day I am compelled to carry out a number of laser procedures and to work on removing hair from the private parts of some women. What is the Islamic ruling on this work of mine? Should I carry on in this job or not?

Summary of answer

Laser hair removal is permissible, unless it is proven to be harmful. But if that requires uncovering the ‘awrah, then it is stipulated that there should be an urgent need for it.

Detailed answer

Table Of Contents

- Women’s ‘awrah in front of other women
- Can a specialist remove your public hair?
- Is laser hair removal haram?
- Removing eyebrow hair by laser

Women’s ‘awrah in front of other women

The basic principle is that women should cover their ‘awrah in front of other women ; this refers to the area between the navel and the knee. It is haram to look at this ‘awrah, except in cases of necessity or need.

Can a specialist remove your public hair?

The jurists have ruled that need includes cases where a woman is unable to remove her pubic hair herself, in which case she may uncover it for another woman to remove it. The same

applies to a man doing it for another man.

It says in Kashshaf al-Qina‘ (5/13):

“The doctor may look at or touch whatever is necessary to look at or touch, even the private part, and to conduct an internal examination, because it is a case of necessity. His statement appears to mean that that is permissible even if the doctor is a dhimmi [a non-Muslim living under Muslim rule].” (This was stated in al-Mubdi‘ and also in al-Mughni)

But that should be in the presence of a mahram or husband, because if the doctor and patient are alone together, there is no guarantee that some infraction will not occur, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “No man is alone with a woman but the Shaytan is the third one present.” (Agreed upon).

She should be entirely covered, apart from the site where medical attention is needed, because the other parts remain subject to the ruling that uncovering them is haram.

Coming under the same heading as the doctor is the one who is caring for a sick man or woman, with regard to helping them do wudu, clean themselves after relieving themselves, and so on; and the one who saves a woman from drowning, fire and the like.

The same ruling also applies with regard to shaving the pubic hair of one who is not able to do that, as was stated by Ahmad. What this appears to mean is: even if the one who does that is a dhimmi. That also applies when there is a reason to find out whether a woman is a virgin or not, or to find out whether a person has reached puberty, because when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) appointed Sa‘d to judge concerning Banu Qurayzah, he looked under their waist wrappers [to ascertain whether pubic hair had started to grow, thereby determining who had reached puberty and who had not].

It was narrated from ‘Uthman that a boy was brought to him who had stolen something, and he said: Look under his waist wrapper. They found that his pubic hair had not started to grow, so they did not cut off his hand [in the hadd punishment for theft].”

Ash-Sharbini al-Khatib said:

“You should understand that what was noted about the prohibition on looking and touching applies when there is no need for that. However, when there is a need for that, then looking and touching is permissible, for the purpose of cupping and medical treatment, even in the case of the private part, because there is a compelling need for that. That is because saying that it is haram in that case will be a cause of hardship.” (Mughni al-Muhtaj, 4/215)

Al-‘Izz ibn ‘Abd as-Salam (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Covering the ‘awrah and private parts is obligatory , and it is an important aspect of human dignity and one of the best of habits, especially with regard to non-mahram women.

But uncovering them is permissible in cases of necessity and need.

With regard to cases of need, that includes each spouse looking at the other, or doctors looking when that is necessary for the purpose of treatment.

With regard to necessity, that includes treating serious injuries.

With regard to looking at the private part, because it is reprehensible and the need to look at it should be extreme, there are more conditions stipulated concerning it than are stipulated with regard to looking at other parts of the ‘awrah. Similarly, with regard to looking at the private parts of women, there are conditions and stipulations with regard to the degree of necessity and need that are not stipulated with regard to looking at the private parts of men, because when it comes to looking at the private parts of women, there is the fear of temptation.

Similarly, looking at the part of the thigh that is closer to the knees is not like looking at the buttocks.”(Qawa‘id al-Ahkam, 1/165)

Is laser hair removal haram?

With regard to the one who is able to shave her own pubic hair and that which is within the limits of the ‘awrah, it is not permissible for her to uncover her ‘awrah for anyone else to look at it.

Laser hair removal is permissible, unless it is proven to be harmful.

But if that requires uncovering the ‘awrah, then it is stipulated that there should be an urgent need for it, such as if the hair is very thick, and cannot be removed by other means, such as plucking or shaving, and a woman is not able to remove it herself with the laser as directed by the doctor. This has been discussed previously in the answer to question no. 95891 .

If the woman does not have any urgent need for laser hair removal, then she has no right to uncover her ‘awrah for that purpose, and you do not have the right to look at her and remove her hair, unless you can direct her to do that herself in the ‘awrah area.

Removing eyebrow hair by laser

It is haram to remove eyebrow hair by using a laser or plucking. Please see the answer to question no. 218579 .

And Allah knows best.