Promoting Gender Equity and Success in Academic Medicine

Reshma Jagsi, MD, DPhil
Associate Professor & Deputy Chair
Department of Radiation Oncology
University of Michigan
Outline

• Women’s current participation in medicine
• Evidence suggesting dysfunction in the pipeline
• Challenges/barriers/mechanisms underlying the dysfunction
• Targeted interventions
Women in the Medical Profession

Representation of Women in the Medical Profession, 1965 to 2012

- Students Enrolled in Medical School
- Practicing Physicians in Healthcare
Women in Academic Medicine

• Low proportions of senior positions are held by women
  – In 2013-2014
    • 21% of full professors were women
    • 15% of department chairs were women
    • 16% of medical school deans were women
The “Gender Gap” in Authorship of Academic Medical Literature — A 35-Year Perspective

Reshma Jaggi, M.D., D.Phil., Elizabeth A. Guancial, M.D., Cynthia Cooper Worobey, M.D., Lori E. Henault, M.P.H., Yuchiao Chang, Ph.D., Rebecca Starr, M.B.A., M.S.W., Nancy J. Tarbell, M.D., and Elaine M. Hylek, M.D., M.P.H.

RESEARCH LETTER


The Representation of Women on the Editorial Boards of Major Medical Journals: A 35-Year Perspective

Lori E. Henault, MPH
Yuchiao Chang, PhD
Elaine M. Hylek, MD, MPH
Does it matter?

- Deontological arguments
- Teleological arguments
Role Models in Academic Medicine

Data from the AAMC, 2007
Should we worry?

- Pipeline hypothesis
  - 15 cohorts graduating medical school 1979-1993
  - proportion of women who advanced to associate professor significantly lower than expected in all but 2 of the 15 cohorts
  - even women who reached the rank of associate professor less likely to become full professor than male counterparts
  - criticisms
- Need for further research
NIH K08 and K23 Awards

• Highly competitive grants made to junior academic medical faculty
  – clinical doctorates
  – demonstrated aptitude and commitment towards research careers

• Articulated goal: to foster career development into independent investigators

• Ideal study population: homogeneous & recent cohort among whom success would be expected

• Lends insights into the mechanisms underlying observed gender differences
5-yr rate of R01 attainment: 19% among women and 25% among men

Gender (HR 0.8, p=0.002) independently significant predictor of R01 attainment on multivariate analysis controlling for K award type, year of award, funding institute, institution, and specialty
Similarities and Differences in the Career Trajectories of Male and Female Career Development Award Recipients
Reshma Jagsi, MD, DPhil, Rochelle DeCastro, MS, Kent A. Griffith, MS, Soumya Rangarajan, MPP, Cristina Churchill, Abigail Stewart, PhD, and Peter A. Ubel, MD

Salary

- 800 MDs who were still working at academic institutions responded to our surveys of K awardees from 2000-2003
- Significant gender difference in annual salary even after adjustment for numerous measures of success/productivity, specialization, and other factors
  - Age
  - Race
  - Marital status
  - Parental status
  - Additional doctoral degree
  - Academic rank
  - Leadership positions
  - Specialty
  - Current institution type (public/private)
  - Current institution region
  - Current institution NIH funding rank group
  - Whether changed institutions since K award
  - K award type
  - Years since K award
  - K award funding institute
  - Receipt of R01 or >$1 million in grants
  - Publications
  - Work hours
  - Percent time in research
What Drives These Differences?

• Specialty “choice”
  – Women may be encouraged to occupy lower-paid specialties, specialties chosen by women may pay less partly because they are predominated by women or involve less valued “feminine” behaviors

• Differences in productivity, hours, and “willingness” to change institutions
  – Constraints of a gender-structured society

• Differences in rank and leadership
  – May reflect biased processes for determining rewards

• But a substantial unexplained gender difference remained even after accounting for all of these factors and more
Gender Differences in Values or Behavior?

• Perhaps mothers are more likely to sacrifice pay for unobserved job characteristics such as flexibility and fathers wish to earn more to support their families
  – Relatively homogeneous job type
  – No interaction between gender and parental status; even women without children had lower pay than men

• Perhaps women don’t ask
Differences in Employer Behavior towards Men and Women?

• Statistical discrimination
  – employers make inferences based on the mean characteristics of a group rather than considering individual characteristics when setting salaries

• The concept of the family wage
Unconscious Biases

• Deeply ingrained notions of gender roles

• NAS report
  – “An impressive body of controlled experimental studies and examination of decision-making processes in real life show that, on the average, people are less likely to hire a woman than a man with identical qualifications, are less likely to ascribe credit to a woman than to a man for identical accomplishments, and, when information is scarce, will far more often give the benefit of the doubt to a man than a woman.”

• Qualitative studies & anecdotes
Not a Level Playing Field

- Seemingly gender-neutral norms, practices, and policies can have a disparate negative impact upon women
  - Examples
    - Leave policies
    - Expectations regarding work hours
    - Tenure clocks & limits on grant eligibility
  - Mechanisms
    - forcing collision of biological & professional clocks
    - magnifying the inequities of the traditional gendered division of labor in our society, in which many women continue to bear the greater burden of domestic responsibility
Among married or partnered respondents with children, after adjustment for work hours, spousal employment, and other factors, women spent 8.5 more hours per week on domestic activities.

In the subgroup with spouses or domestic partners who were employed full-time, women were more likely to take time off during disruptions of usual child care arrangements than men (42.6% vs. 12.4%).
Martell, Lane, and Emrich's (1996) model assumed a tiny bias in favor of men, which accounted for only 1% of variance in promotion.

After many iterations the top level was 65% male.

Operating at a systematic minute disadvantage can have substantial long term effects.

Martell, Lane & Emrich (1996)
Source: Valian (2007)
Developing Targeted Interventions

• Concrete, targeted interventions necessary
• Just as many practices contributing to gender inequity appear gender-neutral, interventions need not be obviously gender-specific either
• Success with initiatives at one institution should be shared to promote development of similar programs elsewhere
Mentoring Programs

• May allow women access to opportunities that otherwise might be allocated by an informal old-boy’s network to which they are not privy

• May help women to “play games” not learned in childhood

• May teach negotiation skills

• Should help develop mentor networks rather than hierarchical dyads

• Still, must be careful not to focus exclusively on “fixing the women”
Institutional Changes

• Ultimately, gender equity must be promoted through recognition and changes at the institutional level
  – Interventions to provide support at stages of particular vulnerability
    • Distinguished Scholar Awards
  – Bias literacy and cultural transformation
    • Hopkins (Task Force), Mount Sinai (Just Desserts), Michigan (ADVANCE: recruitment, retention, climate, leadership), Wisconsin (WISELI: Bias Literacy Workshop), Penn (cultural transformation initiative)
  – Development of transparent & consistent criteria for advancement & compensation
Conclusions

• Women have made substantial strides, but a gender gap remains at senior levels
• Gender equity is important, and there is cause for concern
• The cause is not simply a slow pipeline: even similarly situated men and women do not appear to be rewarded similarly even today
• Institutions must develop targeted interventions to support gender equity and the success of this major contingent of the medical workforce
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