Survey Assessing the Attitudes and Knowledge of Programs on Gender Equity

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INTRODUCTION

As of 2019, the AAMC reported that women comprised over 50% of medical students. There are still barriers that limit women within their medical training. Overall, women occupy less leadership positions, lack mentorship opportunities in residency, and are compensated less than men in the same roles. Moreover, policies for parental/family leave disproportionately affect women, and negatively affect their residency experiences, placing them far behind their male counterparts.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to better understand:

(1) Knowledge of program directors, faculty and staff of gender equity benefits in their own training programs

(2) Which aspects of gender equity medical students, residents, and fellows value the most in residency and training programs

(3) Resident and fellow perspectives regarding gender equity benefits currently offered at their training programs.

PARTICIPANTS

Figure 1. Total 508 participants completed the survey.

Position	N	%
Program Directors/Teaching Faculty/Staff	186	36.6
Residents and Fellows	113	22.2
Medical Students (WSUSOM)	209	41.1

Hospital System	Program Director, Faculty & Staff		Resident & Fellow	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	51	26.6%	15	13.0%
Ascension	17	8.9%	10	8.7%
Beaumont Health	58	30.2%	48	41.7%
Detroit Medical Center	34	17.7%	10	8.7%
Henry Ford Health System	9	4.7%	12	10.4%
Mclaren Health Care	12	6.3%	5	4.3%
St. Joseph Mercy	11	5.7%	15	13.0%
Total	141	100.0%	115	100.0%

METHODS

Participants were asked to complete a 5-minute anonymous Qualtrics survey.

Program Directors/Faculty/ Staff

1.The gender equity policies in place are adequate and sufficient. (1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly Disagree)

Paid Family/Medical Leave
Flexible Board Eligibility Considerations
Same Gender Mentorship Opportunities
Implicit Bias Training
Reporting Procedures for Harassment and Discrimination

Resident/Fellows/Medicals Students

2. How important are each of the following factors/benefits in selecting your future residency/fellowship program? (1 = Essential, 2 = Very Important, 3= Somewhat Important, 4= Unimportant)

Gender Equity Recommendations based on the ACP Gender Equity Recommendations[1]

All Participants

3. How important do you think it is to make improvements in the current areas? (1= Very Important, 2= Important, 3 = Neutral, 4= Low Importance, 5 = Not at all Important)

4. What recommendations do you have about improving gender equity in physician training programs and the workplace?

RESULTS

Figure 2. Resident and fellow responses on gender equity benefits that were important in selecting a residency/fellowship program vs. benefits that were available to them.

Gender Equity Recommendations	How important are each of the following factors/benefits in selecting your future residency/fellowship program?(1 = Essential, 2 = Very Important, 3= Somewhat Important, 4= Unimportant)													
Resident Fellow	1 = Essential & Very Important						2 = Somewhat Important & Unimportant							
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Overall	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	p
Paid family/medical leave outside of sick leave	22	61.1%	42	68.9%	64	66.0%	14	38.9%	19	31.1%	33	34.0%	97	0.437
Additional paid leave as an extension of paid medical/family leave outside of sick leave	19	52.8%	32	52.5%	51	52.6%	17	47.2%	29	47.5%	46	47.4%	97	0.976
Flexible consideration in board eligibility in case of family or medical leave	26	72.2%	39	63.9%	65	67.0%	10	27.8%	22	36.1%	32	33.0%	97	0.402
Sufficient opportunities to seek out mentors of the same gender if preferred	14	38.9%	40	65.6%	54	55.7%	22	61.1%	21	34.4%	43	44.3%	97	*0.011
Inclusion of female members on job search committees	22	61.1%	44	72.1%	66	68.0%	14	38.9%	17	27.9%	31	32.0%	97	0.261
Implicit bias training for workplace discrimination/bias	24	66.7%	34	55.7%	58	59.8%	12	33.3%	27	44.3%	39	40.2%	97	0.289
Proper understanding of reporting procedures for harassment and discrimination	30	83.3%	44	72.1%	74	76.3%	6	16.7%	17	27.9%	23	23.7%	97	0.210
Ability to utilize the reporting procedures for harassment and discrimination without fear of negative consequences	31	86.1%	50	82.0%	81	83.5%	5	13.9%	11	18.0%	16	16.5%	97	0.595

Statistically significant discrepancies were seen in how important residents and fellows ranked benefits such as **paid medical/family leave, flexible considerations in board eligibility, implicit bias training, and harassment reporting procedures** versus what was reported to be available to them. Moreover, many **program directors were unsure regarding about certain gender equity benefits their programs offered and whether the current policies in place were sufficient.**

Did your residency/fellowship program offer any of the following benefits?(1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3= Unsure														
1 = No & Unsure							2 = Yes							
Male		Female		Total			Male		Female		Total		Overall	
n	%	n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	p
20	62.5%	32	60.4%	52	61.2%		12	37.5%	21	39.6%	33	38.8%	85	0.846
26	81.3%	47	88.7%	73	85.9%		6	18.8%	6	11.3%	12	14.1%	85	0.341
27	84.4%	39	73.6%	66	77.6%		5	15.6%	14	26.4%	14	22.4%	85	0.247
14	43.8%	15	28.3%	29	34.1%		18	56.3%	38	71.7%	56	65.9%	85	0.146
15	46.9%	27	50.9%	42	49.4%		17	53.1%	26	46.1%	43	50.6%	85	0.716
14	43.8%	26	49.1%	40	47.1%		18	56.3%	27	50.9%	45	52.9%	85	0.635
5	15.6%	22	41.5%	27	31.8%		27	84.4%	31	58.5%	58	68.2%	85	*0.013
5	15.6%	22	41.5%	27	31.8%		27	84.4%	31	58.5%	58	68.2%	85	*0.013

RESULTS (CONT.)

Figure 3. Recommendations to improve gender equity based on free responses.

"I recommend that programs allow maternal leave without penalty such as increased length of residency. I also recommend more accommodations for new mothers who have a hard time adjusting, whether it be extended deadlines or more flexibility with hours if the mother is lacking in sleep or reasonably late due to caring for her child."

"Topics such as maternity leave and parental leave should be advertised on residency program websites so students can avoid bias by inquiring during interviews but still be able to know pertinent information that are greatly influential in residency program selection. Transparency also improves discussion and accountability for these matters amongst programs."

"It can't be for only younger or newer additions. The older and more established physicians often set the culture, and they're often a resilient source of casual sexism. Improvements ..must also include training to the longstanding members of the profession, or else newer members will still feel the bias and discrimination."

"Required implicit bias training that includes a focus on the importance of language surrounding topics of gender, race/ethnicity/nationality, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, and ability."

CONCLUSION

Residency and fellowship programs are a key part of medical training, where women must be given the agency and opportunity to grow in their field. It is important to understand what future physicians value as important benefits for their training so that programs can work to incorporate these policies.

REFERENCES

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