

Submission Id: 4362

Title

Women Physician's Experiences with Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation in the Workplace

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Health Care Disparities

Presenters

Anish Iyer

Abstract

In the current sociopolitical climate, power dynamics are slowly shifting to finally bring equality amongst men and women in the workplace. However, the field of medicine has stayed silent on this issue, and continues to perpetuate sexism to the highest degree. Female physicians are not only subject to daily harassment, they are also singled out in published studies that deem bathing suits as 'unprofessional.' While recent research has begun to focus on the stark marginalization of female physicians, it fails to address the consequences women face if they choose to speak up against discrimination or harassment in the workplace. This study focuses on female attending physicians' experiences with bullying and discrimination within the workplace, and the consequences they face when these events are reported. This questionnaire surveys 110 female attending physicians in Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Internal Medicine. The questions include information about demographics (age, location, years of experience post-residency), to experiences with bullying, discrimination, and retaliation. The questions are asked in scale-method, requiring the participant to rate their experience from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). From our results, 56.3% of female physicians have been singled out in the workplace due to their gender, and 50.9% of female physicians are being paid less than colleagues of the opposite sex for the same position. Moreover, only 32.6% of females who experienced any form of discrimination reported their experiences to their Human Resources office. Of the 32.6% that reported discrimination an average of 19% experienced retaliation after reporting. From this data, we can reason that female attending physicians not only experience an undisputed amount of bullying and discrimination within the workplace, but they also are less likely to speak out about their experiences in fear of retaliation from their superiors or other consequences including lack of promotions and possibly even termination. In order to rectify this largely unjust environment, we suggest that third party investigators be introduced into the workplace environment to decrease the fear of consequences experienced by working physicians.