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More than 1 in 10 female physicians say they experienced harassment in past three years

New York, NY, June 13, 2018: A new report from Medscape finds that more than 1 in 10 female physicians and 16% of female residents have experienced sexual harassment within the past three years. Overall, 7% of physicians (12% women, 4% men), and 9% of medical residents (16% women, 4% men) reported harassment.

More than 3,700 physicians and medical residents responded to the [2018 Medscape Report: Sexual Harassment of Physicians](#). The report found that nearly half (47%) of physicians who indicated they had been harassed said they were harassed by another physician (54% for residents), with other harassers identified as administrators, non-medical personnel or patients (29%), nurses or nurse practitioners (17%), medical residents and fellows (4%) or medical students (1%). Nearly all (97%) of the female physicians who responded that they had been harassed said the perpetrator was male. Of male physicians who were harassed, 23% were harassed by another man, and 77% were harassed by a woman. Most physicians reporting harassment were between the ages of 35 and 44.

The most common types of harassment reported by survey respondents included sexual comments about body parts or anatomy, unwanted groping, hugging, patting, or other physical contact, sexual remarks and leering, and deliberately infringing on personal space/standing too close. One in 5 physicians reported being asked repeatedly for a date, and more than 20% were harassed with explicit or implicit propositions to engage in sexual activity or received unwanted sexual texts or emails. Sexual assault, rape, promotions or raises in exchange for sexual relations and retaliations for refusal of sexual advances were reported at lower rates.

To read the report, click here: <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/897786?faf=1>

Comprehensive Report of Recent Behaviors

Medscape's report provides a comprehensive view of the current state of sexual harassment for physicians, medical residents, and other health care professionals, i.e. incidence since 2015. Part 1, released today, focuses on the experiences of physicians and medical residents. Part 2 will report on the experiences of nurses, nurse practitioners and physician assistants, and Part 3 on sexual harassment of physicians from patients. Parts 2 and 3 will be released separately. More than 6,200 health care professionals responded to the survey overall.

The findings come amid reports of sexual misconduct in numerous professions and at a time when the percentage of female physicians and medical students is increasing.

"The Medscape report underscores the need to take on the issue of harassment within the medical community and ensure that those who are victimized will be heard," said Hansa Bhargava, M.D., Medscape Medical Editor. "Now is the time to come to terms with the reality of the problem – that harassment can occur in healthcare institutions and many victims feel that their complaints will not be taken seriously. Healthcare organizations and practices need to work to change their cultures and to fully investigate the incidents."

Fears of Retaliation, Trivialization and Loss of Reputation

About half of physicians and residents said they did not confront the issue when the incident happened, saying nothing to their harasser. Forty percent of physicians said they reported the offensive behavior. Of those 40% who did, 54% said that their organizations either did nothing or trivialized the incident, and more than half said that reporting the incident had a negative impact on their job or was not taken seriously. Only one-quarter of all incidents that were reported resulted in an

investigation. Action was taken in about 38% of those cases, including the harasser being reprimanded, fired, moved or made to apologize.

Emotional and Professional Impact

Most physicians experiencing harassment said the incidents took place primarily in areas away from patients, such as administrative areas, on-call rooms, and hallways. One in 5 residents said the abuse took place in the operating room. More than one-third (34%) of physicians who were harassed said it interfered with their ability to do their job. Nearly 40% said they avoided working with specific colleagues when possible, and more than 14% decided to quit their jobs because of harassment.

“Even when looking at the issue within the past three years, the Medscape report finds that sexual harassment and abuse are happening, and sometimes at the hands of colleagues,” said Leslie Kane, MA, Senior Director of Medscape Business of Medicine. “Incidents of harassment can damage physicians professionally and personally, and in some cases interferes with their ability to care for patients. We hope that the report findings increase awareness of the problem and contribute to change.”

Methodology

Survey Method: Physicians, residents, nurses, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants were invited to participate in a 5- to 7-minute online survey.

Screening Requirements: Respondents were required to reside and practice in the United States.

Sample Size: 6,235 respondents across 29+ specialties met the screening criteria and completed the survey; residents were weighted to Association of American Medical Colleges distribution by gender.

- | Total physicians: n = 3,711
- | Total residents: n = 440

Data Collection Period: March 2-April 23, 2018

Sampling Error: The margin of error for the survey was $\pm 1.24\%$ at a 95% confidence level using a point estimate of 50%. The margin of error for physicians who experienced harassment was $\pm 5.92\%$.

About Medscape

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