

New Medscape Report on Women Physicians Finds Work-Life Balance the Major Career Challenge

Stress of Balancing Personal, Professional Demands Outstrips Concerns with Compensation, Parity

New York, NY, July 15, 2020 -- A new Medscape report on the lives of women physicians finds that the demands of a career in medicine put stress on primary relationships, influence decisions regarding how many children to have and may have an impact on whether to seek promotions.

Nearly two-thirds of women surveyed (64%) cited work-life balance as the main challenge they face as physicians, as compared with only 43% who cited compensation and 16% who noted career development. More than 3,000 women physicians across more than 30 specialties responded to the *Medscape Women Physician Report: The Issues They Care About*, conducted from March 6-May 1, 2020. Other challenges included combining parenthood and work (30%), gender equity (19%), and relationships with colleagues and staff (16%). Age discrimination and sexual harassment were noted less frequently.

Although work-life balance was cited most often by women age 45 and younger (71%), the issue was also a factor for 60% of women over age 45.

Click here to read the full report: <https://www.medscape.com/2020-women-physicians>

“Although women physicians have chosen to be doctors and most love what they do, medicine can be a demanding profession, with work that often requires evening or weekend hours, which most view as personal time,” says Hansa Bhargava, MD, pediatrician, and WebMD/Medscape Senior Medical Director. “This can lead to 'personal time tradeoffs,' which can be challenging.”

Relationship Strain, Conflicted Parenting

A career as a physician puts strain on women's primary relationships, with the majority (63%) saying that their work can be a major source of relationship stress. Additionally, women say they are always or often conflicted as a parent (64%) and more than half (52%) say that their work demands, and schedules have influenced the size of their families. This is particularly true of millennial physicians (64%) versus Gen-Xers (55%) or Boomers (43%).

These personal stressors may have an impact on career decisions, with 64% of doctors choosing not to pursue promotions, even though 71% feel confident in their abilities to take on a leadership role.

Impact of Gender Inequity

More than half of all female physicians said they experience gender inequality on the job, and 36% say it has had an impact on compensation. Nearly 60% of women said they feel the need

to modify their personality to be taken seriously as a physician, and that experience seems more profound for younger women. Still, 48% of women said that they felt supported by their male colleagues, particularly millennial women, who said their male colleagues supported gender equality (57%) compared with Gen-X and Boomer women (46%).

“The Medscape report shows that female physicians continue to struggle with the additional societal expectations of being the primary caregiver,” said Leslie Kane, MA, Senior Director, Medscape Business of Medicine. “A more expansive view of gender roles, combined with the growing acceptance of gender equality in younger male physicians, and the increases in the number of female physicians overall, may begin to create the change that women physicians are seeking.”

Medscape Survey Methods:

The 2020 Medscape Women Physician Report was completed by 3,003 U.S. physicians representing 34 specialty areas, including Medscape members and nonmembers. Respondents were invited to respond to the online survey. The margin of error at a 95% confidence level using a point estimate of 50% (+/-) was 1.79%.

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