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Disproportion of Women in General Surgery and Obstetrics-Gynecology Professions

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An increasingly number of women have been enrolling in U.S. medical schools recently and the field of obstetrics-gynecology has become predominantly female, but the profession of general surgery still remains largely unequal between the two genders. There is an observable pattern of gender inequality in both of these specialties, which is a result of several different factors which are affecting all women regardless of their profession. I studied how the stark difference in the percentages of female surgeons versus the percentages of female obstetricians-gynecologists compared to men has been created due to the prescribed gender roles of women in society. I looked at articles in medical journals in the two individual specialties for articles dealing with the different factors, such as family, marriage, social trajectories, to exist stereotypes, that could influence women to choose a particular medical profession. I found that although more women have been enrolling in general surgery over the last couple of years, there is still a large gender difference in the number of women in general surgery and those in obstetrics-gynecology, due to certain factors which have not been publicly addressed. The decrease of women in general surgery has paralleled with an increase of women in obstetrics-gynecology in the same time. The underlying factor that women are often forced to consider before entering a career is the fact that motherhood is often the main reason why women really want to venture into long, strenuous, and demanding careers like general surgery. However, they are often discouraged and negatively treated that deter them from general surgical training, such as the existing negative perceptions and stereotypes, gender-based discrimination, and the lack of motivation by same-sex mentors. Since there is a need to address the gender inequality in general surgery, actions need to be taken. Increasing the number of women in surgical faculty, providing flexibility with maternity leave, and adjusting rigorous residency curriculum are possible steps to help encourage women to pursue the career.

The field of medicine has always remained a very male-dominated field until the last couple of decades. Medicine started to revolutionize as women have started to enter medical schools and different specialties at higher rates. However in the 21st century, women started to outnumber men in medical schools and specialties at the same time. The field of obstetrics-gynecology dramatically increased its number of women and has become female-dominated career over a course of fifty years. Despite the positive growth of women in medical schools, creating a sense of equality among the two sexes in the professions.

The primary care specialty has faced a significant gender gap, but mainly due to the lack of social progression. Without proper acknowledgement and improvements, general surgery will remain a very segregated profession between the two sexes. By understanding the underlying reasons behind the low number of females in general surgery, proper actions can be taken to increase the enrollment of women in surgical specialties. Although there has been an increase in the number of women entering general surgery residencies recently, there is still a stark difference in the percentages of female surgeons versus the percentages of female obstetricians-gynecologists. This section describes the expectations about motherhood, negative perceptions about general surgery and discrimination against medical students.

Introduction

There is a large difference between the perceptions held by female medical students and surgeons. In fact female students are shown through a survey to believe that general surgery was not compatible with a happy marriage, raising family life or the ability to raise children, but the results from the previous study indicated that they disappeared with all three statements and 80% (88 females) stated that they were pleased with their career choice.

The conclusion of this study is that women should be encouraged to enter surgical training and choose surgical careers. Despite the fact that women in surgical training are due to the lack of successful female surgeons, surgeons in general surgery, are similar to the experiences of women in the community. Women in general surgery face similar challenges and expectations personal types of particular profession.

There is also a misconception that most women prefer female obstetrician and gynecologists, while in fact most women have the same sex as their male counterparts at all, which discourages men from entering the profession leading to the increase of women over time.


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