

# Mentorship a key factor for female authorship in GI

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The percentage of U.S. female physician authors of original research in major gastroenterology journals has grown over time, yet the percentage of women in the senior author position remains lower than expected based on the proportion of female gastroenterologists in academia. A look at the evolution of gender in the GI publishing landscape is presented in "[Female authorship in major academic gastroenterology journals: a look over 20 years](#)," published in the June issue of *GIE: Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*, the monthly peer-reviewed scientific journal of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE).

Researchers looked at authorship of articles at five-year intervals in five major journals from 1992 to 2012: *Gastroenterology*; *Hepatology*; *American Journal of Gastroenterology*; *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology (CGH)*; and *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (GIE)*. They compared the percentage of female first (lead) and senior authors with the percentage of [gastroenterologists](#) in academic practice who were female. Their total sample included 2,275 original research articles.

Overall, 18 percent of first authors and 10.1 percent of senior authors were [women](#). For first authors, the percentage increased from 9.1 percent in 1992 to 29.3 percent in 2012. (In 1992, women represented approximately 10 percent of academic gastroenterologists. In 2012, that figure had risen to approximately 26 percent.)

With the exception of 1997, the proportion of women authors in the senior position (typically the author whose name appears last in the list

of contributors) was significantly lower than expected throughout the 20-year timeline based on the proportion of female academic gastroenterologists at the same time. The proportion of female lead authors kept pace with the increasing percentage of women in the field.

Having a female first author was associated with the gender of the senior author. Of the female senior authors, 37 percent had a female lead author. Of male senior authors, 20.7 percent had a female lead author. The research topic also was associated with gender; for example, the odds of female authorship were greater for liver-related publications, but lower for both pancreaticobiliary and endoscopy journals.

According to the study's lead author, Michelle Long, MD, "Future research should explore potential reasons for the lower rates of female authorship in the senior author position, and whether this relates to individual preferences or more systemic issues."

ASGE immediate past president Colleen Schmitt, MD, FASGE, wrote an accompanying editorial, "[Flute or tuba: women and publishing success in top gastroenterology journals](#)." According to Dr. Schmitt, "The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy has stepped out to invest in this idea in a real way, by supporting a cohort of young women and minority faculty with a substantial skills-training program called Leadership Education and Development, or LEAD." She notes that women need strong mentors to help with career management in this area, including funding ideas, requests and reiterations.

Provided by American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

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