

Researchers find marked gender differences in scholarly productivity

February 17 2016

The differences between men and women seem to infiltrate yet another aspect of medicine with a study spearheaded at Women & Infants Hospital, a Care New England hospital, indicating that younger female gynecologic oncologists were less productive scholastically and, therefore, poorly represented in the higher academic ranks, than their male contemporaries.

The study - entitled "Gender Differences in Scholarly Productivity within Academic Gynecologic Oncology Departments" - was recently published in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, the journal of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

"For a variety of reasons, including childbearing and family responsibilities, female gynecologic oncologists at the assistant professor level had lower scholarly productivity than [men](#); however, at higher academic ranks, they equaled their male counterparts," explains Ashley Stuckey, MD, one of the study's authors and a gynecologic oncologist with Women & Infants' Program in Women's Oncology. "Women were more junior in rank, had published for fewer years, and were underrepresented in leadership positions."

The study culled the publications of 507 academic faculty from 137 teaching programs in the United States. Of these, 42 percent were female and 58 percent male. Examining the number of publications and the number of times the publications were cited, the researchers found that men were twice as productive in the lower academic ranks. Men and

women were more equally productive at the higher rank of professor, with women often more productive later in their careers.

"This is true for women in all surgical disciplines," Dr. Stuckey explains. "The reasons include the lack of female role models for younger physicians, lack of mentoring, sexism in [medicine](#) and publishing, and the issue of work-life balance."

Such lower scholarly productivity, the study indicates, correlates with the disparate numbers of [women](#) in advanced academic positions. In gynecologic oncology, only 20.4 percent of department chairs and 29.6 percent of division directors nationwide are female, even though 57.6 percent of faculty was male and 42.4 percent female.

Provided by Care New England

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