

Challenges faced by women in cardiology



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Number of women in the field

- 14% of American College of Cardiology (ACC) fellows-in-training are women [431 women, 2483 men, 273 unknown]
- 6% of FACC are women.
- American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) statistics for no. of Cardiology fellows: 13% in 1994-95 to 18% in 2002-2003
- Thoracic surgery fellows 5.4% women
- Orthopedic surgery residents 7% women
- Pediatrics: 62.5% Gen. Peds. Residents are women
- 49% Peds Cardiol. fellows are women

Compared to other specialties:

- OB-Gyn 71% women
- Pediatrics 66% women
- General Surgery 24% women
- Neurology 38% women
- All disciplines 36% women
- **Cardiology 15.5% -- rate of increase for women much slower than other areas**



ACC Professional Life Survey

- **37% women vs. 21% men in academic settings**
- **8% vs. 3% part-time practice**
- **More women proportionally in solo practice (20% vs. 16%) and in HMO's (8% vs. 2%)**
- **Overwhelming majority of women work full-time**

ACC Professional Life Survey

- **79% vs. 58% clinical cardiology**
- **31% vs. 19% echocardiography**
- **5% vs. 2% transplant cardiology**
- **12% vs. 8% research**
- **18% vs. 41% invasive cardiology**
- **10% vs. 27% interventional cardiology**

Practice Type and Frequency

	Men (n = 546)	Women (n = 518)
Practice setting		
Academic	21%	37%*
Government	4%	4%
Private practice	73%	53%*
Solo practice	16%	20%
Cardiovascular group	61%	51%
Multispecialty group	19%	17%
HMO staff or group model	2%	8%
Other private practice	15%	4%
Other	2%	5%
Primary or secondary roles†		
Clinical cardiologist	58%	79%*
Diagnostic invasive cardiologist	41%	18%*
Interventional invasive cardiologist	27%	10%*
Echocardiographer	19%	31%*
Electrophysiologist	9%	9%
Nuclear cardiologist	4%	4%
Transplant cardiologist	1%	5%‡
General internist	9%	7%
General pediatrician	<1%	<1%
Researcher	8%	13%*
Administrator	5%	5%

p < 0.01,

p < 0.0001, women versus men.

Respondents designated one primary role and one secondary role, so total percentages do not equal 100%. HMO = health maintenance organization.

Personal Life Issues

	Men (n = 546)	Women (n = 518)
Marital status		
Single	4%	19%*
Married	90%	71%*
Living with partner	<1%	1%
Divorced/separated	4%	7%*
Widowed	<1%	<1%
Have children	88%	63%*

p < 0.0001, women versus men.

- 66% of women vs. 23% of men had paid childcare provider in their home.
- 22% of women vs. 9% of men used daycare center for childcare
- 1% used on-site child care facility (not available)

Personal Life Issues

- Prolonged education contributes to signif. delay in parenthood
- Highly educated women have ↑↑ rates of permanent childlessness in western society
- Parenthood imposes “opportunity costs” -- threats to career prospects, loss of free time & income

Radiation Exposure and Career Choice

	Men (n = 87)	Women (n = 218)
Radiation exposure influenced career choices	17%	44%*
If yes, how?		
Decided not to have children	1%	4%
Planned children around radiation exposure	15%	50%*
Chose career with minimal exposure	47%†	47%‡

p < 0.0001, women versus men.
Represents 41 men, or 8% of respondents.
Represents 115 women, or 23% of respondents.

- 33% of women performed fluoro. procedures while pregnant.
- 29% of women did not receive any information about radiation exposure during pregnancy.

Job/Earnings Satisfaction and Advancement

- Overall job satisfaction: 88% of women vs. 92% of men were moderately to very satisfied w/ their work.

Earnings Satisfaction

	Moderately/Very Satisfied	Moderately/Very Dissatisfied
Men in academic cardiology (n = 111)	59%	23%
Men in other practice settings (n = 418)	72%	16%
Women in academic cardiology (n = 186)	54%	33%*
Women in other practice settings (n = 298)	71%	20%

p < 0.001 versus men in academic cardiology and versus men and women in other practice settings.

Advancement

- **Level of Advancement among men and women c/w contemporaries finishing training at the same time:**

	Lower/Much Lower	Higher/Much Higher
Men in academic cardiology (n = 105)	3%	52%
Men in other practice settings (n = 387)	7%	44%
Women in academic cardiology (n = 174)	39%* †	26%*
Women in other practice settings (n = 267)	24%*	27%

p < 0.01 versus men.
p < 0.01 versus women in other practice settings.

- **71% of women vs. 21% of men reported experiencing discrimination during their career. Mostly gender-related for women, race-related for men.**

Gender Gap in Academic Ranks

- **70% of women are at assistant professor or instructor levels, c/w 47% of men**

"Academic medicine is set-up as a career for someone who has complete support at home and who has complete unfettered devotion to their career development. It rewards people with a narrow, deep focus; not those with broader multi-tasking orientations. Women multi-task better, but men are better at focusing, and the reward structure is all about focusing,"

Ann Brown, MD

Associate Dean for Women in Medicine and Science

Duke University Medical School

Durham, NC.

Achieving Academic Success & Having a Family

- **Consider part-time career path**
- **Extend tenure clock**
- **Consider clinical track, where available**
- **Eliminate early a.m. & late p.m. meetings if childcare needs interfere**
- **Compromise w/ your partner!!**
- **Establish short and long-term gameplan**
 - **Identify mentors**
 - **Nurture professional relationships**
 - **Participate in prof. organizations like ACC, AHA**

Betsy Nabel, M.D. Is Family Life an Obstacle to a Career in Investigation?

Achieving Academic Success, contd.

- **Understand criteria for promotion**
- **Know who makes promotional decisions**
- **Develop your professional CV -- keep track of and document your academic accomplishments!**