
Survey: Cardiology Workforce is Ageing, Male-Dominated



Cardiologists are generally happy in their field, but discrepancies remain between the career experiences of men and women, according to results of the American College of Cardiology's third Professional Life Survey. The results, published in *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, also reflect an ageing workforce that is less likely to be in private practice.

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The College has conducted the Professional Life Survey every 10 years since 1996 to capture how changes in cardiovascular medicine have impacted the experiences of cardiologists in both their personal and professional lives. This year 2,313 cardiologists, including 964 women and 1,349 men, completed the survey, which was led by the ACC's Women in Cardiology Leadership Council.

Overall, cardiologists are very satisfied with their work lives, with 88 percent of women and 90 percent of men reporting being moderately to very satisfied. Over 60 percent of men and women were also satisfied with their financial compensation. While career satisfaction for women has risen from 80 percent in 1996, career satisfaction levels for men have remained unchanged over the past 20 years.

The latest survey also found that women were much less likely to report achieving a higher level of advancement compared with their peers – the same trend observed since the first survey. This may partly explain why women are still choosing cardiology at much lower rates than other specialities. In 2013, 13 percent of cardiologists were women, compared with over 35 percent of internists, over 30 percent of haematologists/oncologists, 18 percent of general surgeons and over 50 percent of obstetricians/gynaecologists.

"We need to increase the diversity of our workforce, and find ways to recruit higher numbers of women and underrepresented minorities," says senior author Claire Duvernoy, MD, FACC, chair of the ACC Women in Cardiology Council. "While we are heartened by the finding that the vast majority of cardiologists, both men and women, report high levels of career satisfaction, it is clear that much remains to be done to improve the field for everyone."

The percentage of women reporting discrimination has declined in the past 20 years from 71 percent to 65 percent; however, the percentage of women reporting some form of discrimination in the workplace is still at a rate almost three times as high as men. Women were more likely to report discrimination based on sex and parenting, while men were more likely to report racial and religious discrimination.

The survey shows that over the past 20 years, the workforce is ageing, with a greater percentage of practising physicians who are over the age of 60 compared with 10 and 20 years ago. Cardiologists are also increasingly leaving private practice. The percentage of cardiologists working in a private practice setting has decreased from 73 percent in 1996 to only 23 percent today.

The issue of ageing physicians must be addressed by "finding ways to improve the pipeline of new cardiologists," according to Dr. Duvernoy.

Source: American College of Cardiology
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