

Women in academic medicine 'manage femininity' to succeed

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(HealthDay)—Women tend to manage their femininity so as to be considered adherent to the unspoken code of the non-gendered worker, according to research presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, held from Aug. 22 to 25 in Chicago.

Emily Jones, from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, conducted a quantitative project involving 26 senior women faculty at a large Midwestern medical center in an effort to understand their experiences.

Jones found that the majority, but not all, women experienced isolation and exclusion, [sexual harassment](#), and/or pressures to perform the second shift. In order to negotiate their professional identities as women, they had to manage their [femininity](#) so as to be considered in line with the unspoken code of the non-gendered worker. Strategies included appearing easy-going or carefully constructing their femininity to

downplay their difference based on gender. The women explained their success as based on [hard work](#) or being exceptional in a meritocracy.

"Most of these women were giving two reasons for their success," Jones said in a statement. "They were talking about meritocracy and pushing aside the gender piece, which I found interesting. And then they would also talk about negotiating self and identity in this and navigating the space because they had to manage their femininity. They couldn't be too feminine, or they were weak or too girly. They couldn't be too masculine, or they would be perceived as too butch."

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