

Women less likely to be academic grand rounds speakers than men

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Women are less likely than men to be chosen as speakers during grand rounds, the academic mainstay of expert-delivered lectures used to share patient-care guidelines and cutting-edge research within clinical departments. Those findings by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine were published today in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

Despite women comprising 47 percent of medical students, 46 percent of residents and 36 percent of faculty nationwide, only 26 percent of grand rounds speakers were women. Across clinical specialties, grand rounds speakers were 44 percent less likely than [medical students](#), 39 percent less likely than residents, and 21 percent less likely than faculty to be women. Additionally, speakers invited from outside institutions were less likely to be women than those invited to speak at grand rounds from among an institution's own personnel.

"The people at the podiums do not resemble the people in the audience," said Julie Boiko, M.D., M.S., who led the study while a medical student at the Pitt School of Medicine. "While gender representation and equality in medicine has been an important area of student discussion in recent years, this is the first time we have data to support that there may be a gender bias in speaker selection at academic grand rounds."

Data for the JAMA research letter was collected from nine major clinical specialties and 79 medical schools and academic hospitals. In total, researchers analyzed more than 200 grand rounds websites and

calendar listings for speaker series, as well as more than 7,000 individual sessions for speaker gender and institutional affiliations.

As follow up to this study, researchers plan to identify specific factors associated with having greater gender balance on grand rounds speaker rosters.

"We were surprised by the consistency of this underrepresentation across most specialties and the discovery that speakers invited from outside a given institution are less likely to be women than speakers invited from within the institution," said Alyce Anderson, coauthor of the study and an M.D./Ph.D. candidate at the Pitt School of Medicine. "With this data, speaker planning committees, departments and institutions can strive for [gender](#) representation that approximates that of individual clinical specialties' faculty and/or trainees. Such efforts may have a positive effect on retaining women in the academic medical workforce."

Provided by University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences

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