

Gender bias in medicine has far-reaching consequences

July 13 2018



(HealthDay)—Overlooking women in medicine can have far-reaching

consequences, according to a perspective piece published in the June 14 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Lisa S. Rotenstein, M.D., M.B.A., from Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Anupam B. Jena, M.D., Ph.D., from Harvard Medical School, both in Boston, examined the potential consequences when women in [medicine](#) are slighted, overlooked, or explicitly wronged.

The authors note that in [academic medicine](#), harassment remains common; these issues begin early in training, with negative gender-based experiences reported by preclinical medical students. Disparities continue. Male physicians receive significantly greater compensation and recognition than females; over time, these gaps have not decreased significantly. Other, less obvious slights are also prevalent, with female doctors often assumed by patients to be nurses or other types of caregivers and experiencing more disrespect from nonphysician professionals. In terms of clinical care, hospitalized elderly patients have lower 30-day mortality and readmissions when treated by [female physicians](#); similar positive effects on outcomes have been seen for treatment with female surgeons. Female physicians are more likely to deliver guideline-concordant care. The exclusion of women from certain fields such as urology has consequences for the doctor-patient relationship, especially in specialties addressing sensitive topics. En masse, exclusion of [women](#) from the upper echelons of medicine may have real implications for patient care.

"Perhaps emphasizing these consequences will bolster efforts to ensure respectful and fair workplaces for female physicians," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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