

# Women surgeons remain underrepresented in surgeon-scientists

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Despite earlier success in receiving National Institutes of Health (NIH)

funding, women surgeons are underrepresented among surgeon-scientists, according to a study published online March 20 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Mytien Nguyen, from the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut, and colleagues examined the distribution of biomedical research funding by the NIH among women and men surgeon-scientists who were [principal investigators](#) between 1995 and 2020. The distribution of NIH funding was examined using two metrics: holding a large-dollar [grant](#) and being a super principal investigator (SPIs) with \$750,000 or more in total annual research funding.

Overall, 2,078 principal investigator surgeons received funding from the NIH between 1995 and 2020. The researchers found that during this period, the proportion of women academic surgeons who were surgeon-scientists remained unchanged (1.8 percent in 1995; 2.4 percent in 2020). Women surgeon-scientists obtained their first NIH grant earlier in their career than their male counterparts (mean years after first faculty appointment, 8.8 versus 10.8 years) and were as likely to obtain large-dollar grants. However, women remained significantly underrepresented among SPIs and were 25 percent less likely to be an SPI.

"Increasing [gender diversity](#) among surgeon-scientists may prove to be critical in promoting the surgeon-scientist workforce and improving diversity within the surgery research enterprise," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to Cepheid.

**More information:** Mytien Nguyen et al, Gender Disparity in National Institutes of Health Funding Among Surgeon-Scientists From 1995 to 2020, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.3630](#)

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