

Nearly half of women in medicine with children pass up career advancement

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Three-fourths of women in medicine report delaying pregnancy due to

competing priorities of parenthood and career, according to a study published online July 27 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Jennifer B. Bakkensen, M.D., from the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, and colleagues evaluated delayed childbearing and infertility among women in medicine and the extent to which women physicians may alter [career](#) trajectories to accommodate family building and parenthood. The analysis included survey responses from 1,056 cisgender women (mean age, 38.3 years) from across level of training (attending physicians: 67.6 percent; residents or fellows: 26.8 percent), specialty (surgical: 38.6 percent; nonsurgical: 60.4 percent), and practice setting (academic: 45.2 percent; private: 24.9 percent; community: 21.0 percent).

The researchers found that 86.2 percent of respondents were married or partnered and 65.3 percent of respondents had children. Three-quarters of individuals (75.6 percent) reported delaying family building and one-third (36.8 percent) reported experiencing infertility. More than one-quarter of women with children (28.8 percent) said they had taken extended leave, 24.8 percent said they had chosen a different specialty, 47.1 percent said they had reduced their [work hours](#), 24.8 percent said they had changed their practice setting, and 47.2 percent said they had passed up opportunities for [career advancement](#).

"These findings suggest that fertility and [family](#) building concerns among [women](#) in medicine may contribute to ongoing gender disparities and attrition and represent a potentially critical area for policy reform and future change," the authors write.

More information: Jennifer B. Bakkensen et al, Childbearing, Infertility, and Career Trajectories Among Women in Medicine, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.26192](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.26192)

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