

# Women under-represented in academic medicine

10 July 2014

Women are under-represented in academic medicine resulting in a waste of public investment due to loss of research talent. Writing in the July issue of the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, authors of an essay on women and academic medicine say that as a consequence of female under-representation, some areas of medicine are under-researched at a cost to patients and society. Discriminatory practices and unconscious bias, they say, continue to occur in academic medicine, despite a substantial fall in traditional discrepancies between men and women in medicine in recent years. The proportion of women entering medical school today is around 53%.

"There has been a longstanding gender imbalance in clinical academia as well as laboratory-based basic medical sciences", said lead author Professor Jonathan Grant, Director of the Policy Institute at King's College London. "This inequality increases substantially with seniority, with women representing only 15% of professors in UK medical schools."

Chief Medical Officer Professor Dame Sally Davies, a co-author of the essay, said: "The lack of women participating in the clinical academic research system is likely to be implicitly biasing today's research agenda and, by consequence, tomorrow's clinical practice." She added: "The system needs to be reformed by medical schools improving the culture for and chances of women in clinical academia, through schemes such as Athena Swan. The adoption and embedding of gender neutral policies, for example flexible working, will be of benefit to all clinical academics whether [women](#) or men."

**More information:** Women and academic medicine: a review of the evidence on female representation ([DOI: 10.1177/0141076814528893](https://doi.org/10.1177/0141076814528893)) by Maryse Penny, Rosanna Jeffries, Jonathan Grant and Sally C. Davies will be published by the

*Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* on Friday 11 July 2014.

Provided by SAGE Publications

APA citation: Women under-represented in academic medicine (2014, July 10) retrieved 7 March 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-07-women-under-represented-academic-medicine.html>

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