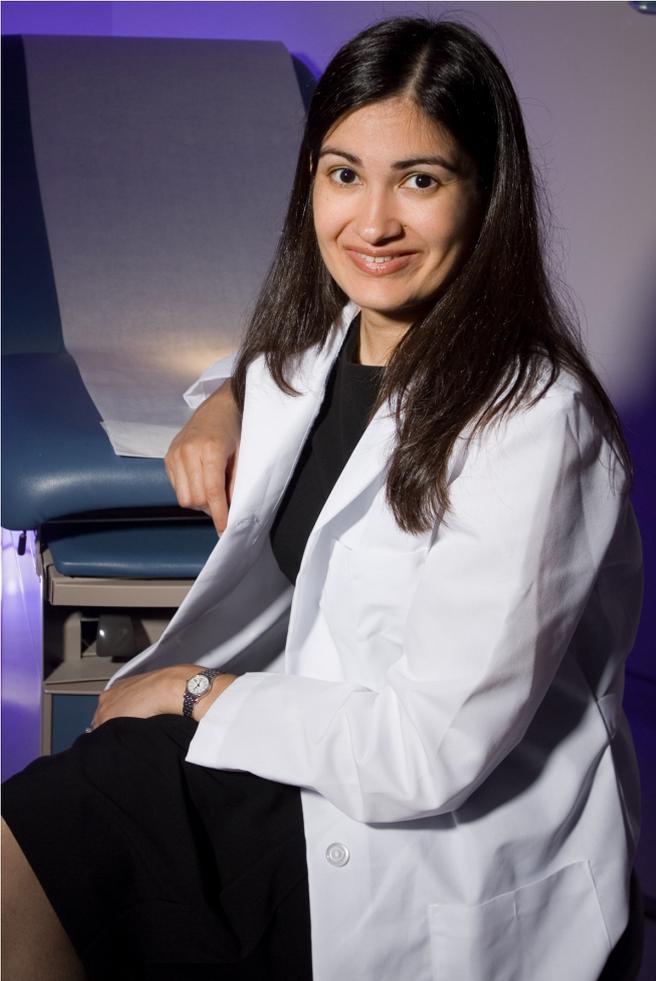


30 percent of female physicians report sexual harassment

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Reshma Jagsi, M.D., D.Phil. Credit: University of Michigan Health System

In a survey of high-achieving physician-scientists, nearly a third of women reported experiencing sexual harassment.

"This is a sobering reminder that our society has a long way to go before we achieve gender equity," says study author Reshma Jagsi, M.D., D.Phil., associate professor and deputy chair of radiation oncology at the University of Michigan Medical

School.

Researchers surveyed 1,066 men and women who had received a career development award between 2006-2009 from the National Institutes of Health. These awards are given to promising physician-scientists to develop their career as independent investigators. The physicians are now mid-career; average age when surveyed was 43.

Physicians were asked a number of questions about their career experiences, including questions about gender bias, gender advantage and sexual harassment.

Women were more likely than men to report both perceptions and experiences with gender bias: 70 percent of women vs. 22 percent of men perceived gender bias, and 66 percent of women vs. 10 percent of men said they experienced gender bias.

In addition, 30 percent of women compared to 4 percent of men said they had experienced sexual harassment in their professional careers.

"The perception among many of us is that this type of behavior is a thing of the past. So it's sobering to see quite how many relatively young women in this sample reported experiences with harassment and discrimination," Jagsi says.

The study is published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

As women now make up about half of medical school students, the researchers emphasize the importance of recognizing unconscious bias as well as overtly inappropriate behaviors.

"We need to recognize the degree to which sexual harassment and gender inequality continue to be an issue in academic medicine," Jagsi says. "Women who experience these types of harassment may be less likely to report these

incidents if they feel they are unique and aberrational. Our data shows this is not an unusual situation and reflects a larger societal problem."

More information: *JAMA*, [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2016.2188](#)

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