

Paper #11

Discrepancies in Work-Family Dynamics Between Female and Male Orthopaedic Surgeons

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Introduction: While orthopaedic surgery is one of the most rewarding fields in medicine, rigorous training, lifestyle, and professional obligations often conflict with family life. The objective of this study is to identify differences in work-family balance between female and male orthopaedic surgeons in the U.S.

Methods: An anonymous survey was completed by 347 orthopaedic surgeons (153 female, 194 male) collecting data within the domains of demographics, work, family, and career and work-family balance satisfaction. Differences between males and females and risk factors for career dissatisfaction were identified.

Results: Female surgeons were younger than males (mean 41.1 vs. 50.1 years, $p < 0.001$) and earlier in their careers ($p < 0.001$). Opportunities for consulting (7.84% vs. 31.4%, $p < 0.001$), course faculty (19.0% vs. 39.2%, $p < 0.001$), and academic titles (30.7% vs. 47.4%, $p = 0.002$) were significantly less common among females. There was a significant income disparity between women and men (on average \$300k-\$400k vs. \$400k-\$500k, $p < 0.001$). Females were more likely never married (12.4% vs. 2.58%, $p < 0.001$) or married at a later age (30.2 ± 4.68 , vs. 28.3 ± 3.89 , $p < 0.001$). Females were more likely to have no children (29.4% vs. 7.81%, $p < 0.001$), require fertility treatment (32% vs. 11.9%, $p < 0.001$), and have children after training (63.0% vs. 31.1%, $p < 0.001$). Female surgeons reported increased responsibility in parenting ($p < 0.001$) and household duties ($p < 0.001$). Overall, 94.5% of surgeons were satisfied with their career, though female gender independently predicted dissatisfaction ($p = 0.044$). Work-family balance satisfaction was 52.9% in females and 65.98% in males ($p = 0.008$).

Conclusion: This study highlights deficiencies in work-family balance which appear to uniquely impact female surgeons. The discrepancy in work-family balance must be addressed to narrow the gender gap so as to allow women to achieve their personal and professional goals concurrently, as well as continue to attract, support, and retain women as successful orthopaedic surgeons.

Notes
