

Training the Next Generation of Physicians – Recognizing the Importance of Women in Leadership Roles



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In 2017, for the first time, the number of women enrolling in U.S. medical schools exceeded that of men.¹ The very same year, the association of Swiss Women in Radiation Oncology (SWIRO) was established to help with the promotion, education and networking of women in healthcare, especially in the field of radio-oncology.² Furthermore, to encourage more women to explore careers and leadership roles especially in hematology and oncology, the American Society of Hematology (ASH) raised awareness in 2018 using the hashtags “#SHEmatology” and “#WOMANcology”.³

Now, a recent study reported by Dr Sophia Kamran, Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology at Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA, showed that despite the notable progress in female representation in medical schools, women have been highly concentrated at lower faculty ranks, specifically at the instructor level.⁴ Kamran et al. (2022) further highlight the unmet need for academic physicians from diverse backgrounds who can act as role models to support diversity, equity and inclusion priorities regardless of their own racial and ethnic identities.

In addition to the pressing need to achieve a diverse workforce by recruiting individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, institutions must also create an inclusive environment, focus on

retention and promotion, and make intentional investments of time and resources to tackle long-standing faculty biases and prepare these persons for leadership roles. The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) Women for Oncology (W4O) is leading the way in the field by championing and supporting female oncologists; helping them develop their careers and flourish in positions of leadership.⁵ The W4O network helps raise awareness and unite professionals, providing a forum to share challenges and opportunities, collaborate on new projects and open doors to leadership roles.

At *healthbook TIMES Oncology Hematology*, we are committed to improving the representation of top clinicians and researchers from both genders, as well as those from diverse ethnic groups, by challenging the current *status quo* and identifying inclusion gaps in our journal.

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