UEMS: Survey on Women In Surgery Europe (WISE)

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Secretary, Section of Surgery
Copenhagen 6th May, 2017
Background

- At the UEMS meeting in Athens in 2015 Dr Eleni Karafoka gave a talk based on a questionnaire study conducted on the professional situation for Greek female surgeons.

- As surgical work force is increasingly feminized in Europe these obstacles for female surgeons need to be investigated within the UEMS setting.

- Secretary project for Malin Sund.

- A working group is being formed. Interested can contact the secretary at malin.sund@umu.se.
Background – what is already known?

Zhunge et al Ann Surg 2011
Background – what is already known?

Background – what is already known?

Table 3  Responses to the item “In an academic surgical practice, I have had/will probably have a harder time obtaining an academic position than people of the opposite sex”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (n = 83)</td>
<td>3 (3.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (n = 69)</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>23 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (14.5%)</td>
<td>38 (45.8%)</td>
<td>30 (36.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (20.3%)</td>
<td>24 (34.8%)</td>
<td>6 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P < .001 (Fisher’s exact test).

Table 4  Gender as a career barrier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My gender is currently a barrier to my career aspirations/advancement*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
<td>8 (9.5%)</td>
<td>42 (50%)</td>
<td>33 (39.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men (n = 84)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women (n = 70)</td>
<td>3 (4.3%)</td>
<td>13 (18.6%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td>29 (41.4%)</td>
<td>11 (15.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s attitudes about my gender are currently a barrier to my career aspirations/advancement*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>7 (8.6%)</td>
<td>44 (54.3%)</td>
<td>29 (35.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men (n = 81)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women (n = 70)</td>
<td>5 (7.2%)</td>
<td>18 (25.7%)</td>
<td>11 (15.7%)</td>
<td>26 (37.1%)</td>
<td>10 (14.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P < .001.
### Background – what is already known?

#### Table 2. Deterrents to a Career in Surgery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deterrent</th>
<th>Women, No. (%)</th>
<th>Men, No. (%)</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diminishing rewards</td>
<td>4 (4.4)</td>
<td>11 (21.6)</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased number of lawsuits</td>
<td>8 (8.9)</td>
<td>7 (13.7)</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle (during residency)</td>
<td>75 (83.3)</td>
<td>39 (76.5)</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family concerns</td>
<td>43 (47.8)</td>
<td>34 (66.7)</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursements</td>
<td>2 (2.2)</td>
<td>4 (7.8)</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>26 (28.9)</td>
<td>25 (49.0)</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of stress</td>
<td>22 (24.4)</td>
<td>13 (25.5)</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of role models/mentors</td>
<td>11 (12.2)</td>
<td>3 (5.9)</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeons’ perceived personalities</td>
<td>36 (40.0)</td>
<td>11 (21.6)</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of surgery as an “old boys’ club”</td>
<td>20 (22.2)</td>
<td>2 (3.9)</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of women in surgery</td>
<td>5 (5.6)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Garagiulo et al Arch Surg 2006
Aim: A pan-European on-line survey on the working conditions of female surgeons in Europe

WISE 1: The focus on this survey was on the *perceived* difficulties for female surgeons within their countries and the idea is to understand how the surgical leadership views the current situation of female surgeons. Reported Copenhagen.

WISE 2: The focus will be the *experienced* difficulties by the female surgeons themselves, which could differ from what the leadership observes. Reported at the fall meeting.
Q1 What country are you from?

41 responders
18 countries
Q2: What is the percentage of female surgeons in your country?

Reply: 41  No reply: 0
Q4: What percentage of women, with a surgical specialist training, are actively working as surgeons in your country? Please do not include those above the retirement age in your estimate.

Reply: 39   No reply: 2
Q5: What is the percentage of women among medical students in your country?

![Bar Chart]

Reply: 41  No reply: 0
Q6: What is the percentage of women among surgical trainees in your country?

![Bar chart showing the percentage of women among surgical trainees in different ranges: Less than 25% (10%), 25-50% (50%), 50-75% (30%), More than 75% (5%), I do not know (0%).]

Reply: 41  No reply: 0
Q7: What do you think are the major obstacles for women to practice as surgeons in your country? (Multiple answers allowed)

- Lack of good role models
- Incompatibility of combining work and family
- Unfair division of work
- Gender bias and lack of support for work-life balance
- Gender bias in education and training
- Gender bias in promotion and compensation
- Gender bias in leadership roles
- Gender bias in the selection of patients
- Gender bias in the treatment of patients
- Gender bias in the selection of mentors
- Gender bias in the selection of sponsors
- Gender bias in the selection of collaborators
- Gender bias in the selection of funding sources
- Gender bias in the selection of reviewers
- Gender bias in the selection of journals
- Gender bias in the selection of editors
- Gender bias in the selection of book publishers
- Gender bias in the selection of conference organizers
- Gender bias in the selection of professional associations
- Gender bias in the selection of regulatory agencies
- Gender bias in the selection of policy makers

Reply: 37  No reply: 4
Q8: Which are the subspecialities that female surgeons tend to choose in your country? (Multiple answers allowed)

- Colorectalology
- IPB
- Oesophageal Gastric
- Breast
- Endocrine
- Transplantation
- Plastic
- Trauma
- Surgical Oncology
- General

Reply: 39   No reply: 2
Q9 Why do you think women choose these specialities?

- Work-life balance: 18
- Role models/tradition: 4
- Less physically demanding: 3
- More interested in these: 1
- Mixed: 2

Reply: 30  No reply: 11
Q10: Feminization of surgery is sometimes described as being problematic. Do you think this is the case in your country?

Reply: 40   No reply: 1
Q11 What kind of measures have to be initiated to overcome the perceived problems with feminization of surgery?

- Organizational changes: 8
- None: 9
- Gender equality: 6
- More female role models: 4

Reply: 30  No reply: 11
Moving on to WISE 2 – Comments and ideas are welcome!
Secretary report

• Potential new members – interest shown: Latvia and France

• Still official nomination by the national medical associations (NMA) missing for a number of delegates. The secretary will contact these delegates directly!

• If a scientific society nominates the delegate the NMA needs to approve...and we need a copy of that approval

• Send to info@uems.eu or to malin.sund@umu.se