

Creating equitable environments: Pediatrics supplement spotlights women in medicine

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A mid-career female physician shared this story in “Women in Medicine,” a digital supplement to the September issue of *Pediatrics*:

“I interviewed for executive positions at prestigious institutions that felt hostile. The subtext of the interview was: ‘How could a younger woman direct and supervise senior male colleagues?’ Upon reflection, I realized it was counterintuitive ‘to mimic the traditional model’ of leadership. Unlike earlier in my career, I decided to be authentic and transparent during the interviews, asking directly, ‘How will (this institution) respond to a younger woman leader?’ When I got the position, I felt more natural and genuine, stepping into the position as my ‘full self.’”

The supplement at https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/148/Supplement_2 explores strategies for supporting the diverse workforce of female physicians and includes a unified call to action from the CEOs of six major medical organizations, including the AAP.

In 2018, the AAP led a partnership with other medical groups, forming Women’s Wellness through Equity and Leadership (WEL) to address equity and leadership and foster improvement. WEL gathered 18 faculty members from various organizations to take part in networking and training over 18 months; 50 female physicians were recruited as WEL scholars.

The supplement highlights their work and the contributions of other experts and leaders.

Despite progress being made for women in medicine, equity issues remain. Women report less control over day-to-day work, often receive lower compensation, face more challenges balancing work and home, and cite burnout more often than male counterparts. Those who have been historically marginalized experience additional disparities in pay and discrimination. Further, the pandemic has heightened the stress and exacerbated inequities, making the effects of racism and discrimination more evident.

Topics discussed in eight articles include the state of women in medicine, advancing women to leadership, inclusive environments, promoting culture change within organizations, using metrics to promote equitable work environments, innovative wellness models and evaluation of the WEL program.

Guest editors of the supplement were Susan Hingle, M.D., MACP, FRCP, FAMWA; Erin Hayes Kelly, Ph.D.; Florence Rivera, M.P.H.; and V. Fan Tait, M.D., FAAP.

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