



NIH **U**pdates on Women in Science News for Yo**U** to Use!

Halle Ritter, Writer
Keren Witkin, Ph.D., Editor
Office of Research on Women's Health
Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health
United States Department of Health and Human Services

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NIH Updates on Women in Science is brought to you by the [NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers](#). We encourage you to share this e-newsletter with colleagues who may find it of interest.

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National Institute of General Medical Sciences Announces Pathfinder Award Winners

In October, six researchers received Pathfinder Awards to fund projects aimed at increasing scientific workplace diversity. Mary Carnes, M.D., Bradley S. Duerstock, Ph. D., Vivian Lewis, M.D., Richard McGee, Ph. D., Joan Reede, M.D., M.P.H., and Hannah A. Valantine, M. D. were the award recipients. This award, the NIH Director's ARRA Funded Pathfinder Award to Promote Diversity in the Scientific Workforce, is granted by the National Institute of General

Medical Sciences and funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Projects include development of an interactive tool for the reduction of stereotyping and bias, testing of a coaching model for mentoring of underrepresented groups, and creation of resources to aid individuals with disabilities in biomedical careers.

<http://www.nih.gov/news/health/oct2010/nigms-26.htm>

Characteristics of Women in Senior Technical Positions

A study by the Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology and the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University examined the characteristics and perspectives of women in senior technical positions, who comprise less than 4 percent of the technical workforce. They found that senior technical women are as experienced as their male colleagues, and perceive similar personality attributes to be important for success in their field. Senior technical women are more likely to be in managerial positions when compared to their male colleagues, and more likely to have a technical degree than women in entry- or mid-level positions, according to the study.

Senior technical women are equally likely as men to self-report as analytical, risk-taking, and working long hours, and less likely to report being innovators. They are more likely than male colleagues to sacrifice for their job success, including delaying having children, losing sleep, and cutting back on their social life. Women in high-ranking positions in tech are also more likely than men to have a partner who also has a career. Finally, the study noted that senior technical women often give professional development programs at their companies low scores, despite recognizing the value of such programs. Based on their findings, the authors offered recommendations for encouraging and retaining senior women in the tech industry, including early intervention, mentoring, consideration of differing communication styles, and increased awareness of varying family configurations.

[Senior Technical Women: A Profile of Success](#)

Study Suggests Females Less Competitive at a Young Age

A German research group studied children and teenagers, three to eighteen years of age, in order to more closely examine the gender gap in competitive behavior. The team established a structure where participants could choose between a non-competitive format of an activity with low payoffs for each completed task, or a competitive format with high payoffs for the winning participants but no payoffs for the others. Results showed that, while the female and male participants performed at relatively equal levels, females were approximately 15-20% less likely than males to choose the competitive format. The sex difference was similar across age groups. The researchers suggested that this phenomenon may be related to the gender gap in the competitive job market, and expressed interest in designing a task to ascertain if this gap exists in even younger children.

[Gender Differences in Competition Emerge Early in Life](#)

Mentoring Workshop Reveals Areas for Improvement

Pennsylvania State University, in conjunction with the AAAS Center for Advancing Science and Engineering Capacity, hosted the Building Science, Engineering, and Technology (B-SET) Leadership Workshop in October 2009. Organized with the goal of focusing on the disparity between men and women in science and technology careers, the workshop sought to encourage networking between mid-level career women and senior professionals, and examine or broaden participants' understanding of working mentor relationships. Mentors reported their reasons for participating as interest in helping younger professionals, learning from colleagues, and addressing the gender gap in science and technology careers. The mentee entrance survey revealed that many participants failed to see the big picture of their career goals and how these might change with the needs of their workplaces. The survey also revealed a narrow view of the potential benefits of mentoring.

After the workshop, participants rated workshop activities highly, including the mentor introductory panel and the time allocated for networking. Two weeks after the workshop, 29% of participants had already connected with contacts from the workshop and 56% planned to do so shortly. The conference organizers concluded by identifying career advancement factors that could be improved through successful mentoring, including understanding office organization and power structure, and maintenance of work-life balance.

[Prepared for Work, Not the Career: Building Science, Engineering and Technology Leadership](#)

Study Compares Employment and Compensation of Male and Female Veterinary Graduates

The American Veterinary Medical Association released a survey of veterinary graduates' salaries, debt, and employment opportunities. The survey included 94% of all spring 2010 veterinary graduates, of whom 78% were female. They found that of the 79% of graduates who received a job offer, 86% were male and 77% were female. Average starting salaries, excluding advanced educational programs, were approximately \$69,250 for males and \$66,650 for females. 58% of males and 37% of females planned to apply for a residency. Males in the study had slightly lower educational debt than females. Approximately equal numbers of males and females received additional benefits, such as paid leave and license fees. Most demographic characteristics, such as age and racial background, were not significantly different between male and female survey participants; however, more males than females had at least one child (14% versus 5%).

[Employment of Female and Male Graduates of US Veterinary Medical Colleges, 2010](#)

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