



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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Global Perspectives on Gender Equality Encouraging but Still Limited

The Pew Research Center, as part of their Global Attitudes Project, released a report examining views on gender equality across a sampling of countries. The report was entitled “Gender Equality Universally Embraced, but Inequalities Acknowledged.” The study polled at least 750 individuals in each of 22 countries, asking questions about equal rights for

women, women in the workforce, egalitarian marriages, women's education, and sex differences in general life satisfaction. Researchers also looked at differences in answering patterns between men and women, and noted some trends from previous years of data.

The study found that the majority of survey participants from all countries supported equal rights for women, yet indicated that their countries needed continued effort to make those rights a reality. Solid majorities in every country supported a woman's ability to work outside the home, but a majority in ten countries and sizeable minorities in others also believed that men should have hiring priority when jobs are scarce. Many respondents noted that job opportunities in their countries were disproportionately skewed towards men, and researchers noted that this sentiment was particularly widespread in wealthy countries or where there has been recent economic growth.

Respondents in 19 of the 22 countries indicated that marriages where both spouses have jobs are more satisfying. In 18 countries, a majority believed that a university education for girls is at least as important as it is for boys. In 4 of 7 Muslim countries polled, respondents indicated that a woman should have the right to choose whether or not she wears a veil. Finally, there were interesting findings from the question of whether men or women have better lives overall. In 10 nations surveyed, more respondents believe men to have a better life, while in 10 other countries, more respondents indicated no substantial difference in quality of life between the sexes. In only two countries did more respondents report that life is better for women. In most countries, women were more likely than men to indicate that life is better for men.

[Gender Equality Universally Embraced, but Inequalities Acknowledged](#)

Misperceptions of STEM Careers Inhibiting Gender-Diverse Recruitment

The Association for Psychological Science published a study examining factors that contribute to underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. Lack of encouragement for women to pursue such careers, perceived gender differences in science and math, and cultural stereotypes have already been identified as relevant factors. The authors of this study were specifically interested in the discrepancy between women's underrepresentation in STEM careers and gender equity gains in fields such as medicine that require a similar amount of scientific training. They hypothesized that the difference could be attributed to people perceiving STEM careers as not fulfilling community-oriented goals and ideals, such as caring for others and working with people. Previous research cited by the study indicated that women display a greater preference for such community-oriented goals.

The study supported the idea that women are less likely to pursue careers that they perceive as incompatible with their personal values: They found a negative correlation between identification with community-oriented goals and interest in STEM careers. This correlation persisted even after controlling for experience and self-efficacy in science and math fields. Since STEM careers do actually provide important means of helping people, the authors proposed that emphasizing the ways in which STEM careers support community-oriented goals may increase the participation of women.

[Taken for Granted: Choosing Between Science and Caring?](#)

Selected Results from the COACHE Tenure-track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey Released

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) released an extensive survey asking pre-tenure faculty to rate their satisfaction and experiences in “areas deemed critical to early-career faculty success.” This information was then broken down by gender and academic area. Factors surveyed included clarity of tenure expectations, work and home issues, compensation, and global satisfaction.

The study found that both men and women in multiple scientific fields considered their colleagues disrespectful of work/life balance efforts. Additionally, men were more likely than women across many fields to report that their institutions or colleagues helped make raising children compatible with the tenure track. Women were more likely than men to positively rate stop-the-clock tenure measures. Across all fields, more men than women rated survey items as satisfactory or better. Faculty in the physical sciences, humanities, and social sciences expressed the most satisfaction with survey items, and faculty in education and visual and performing arts reported the smallest percentage of survey items as satisfactory.

[Selected Results from the COACHE Tenure-Track Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey](#)

[Job Satisfaction and Gender](#)

Women and Minorities in Academic Medicine Report Isolation

The Journal of Gender Medicine published a study on the experiences and coping strategies of women faculty in academic medicine, based on interviews with faculty members from multiple medical schools. The authors found that female faculty members often feel isolated, undervalued, subject to gender role expectations, and stressed by the work-centric culture. Additionally, they found that women often cope with these issues by either self-silencing to avoid conflict or by creating supportive micro-environments. The study noted that minority women often feel themselves to be at a double disadvantage.

The same authors published a related study in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, examining the perceptions of underrepresented minority faculty regarding the culture of academic medicine. This study found similar feelings of isolation, as well as accounts of disrespect and bias, lack of mentors and role models, and frustration with the slow pace of social change.

[Women Faculty: An Analysis of their Experiences in Academic Medicine and their Coping Strategies](#)

[Race, Disadvantage and Faculty Experience in Academic Medicine](#)

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