

# The Current State of Gender Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Radiology Workplace: A Survey

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## INTRODUCTION

Limited information has been published on the occurrence, types, and effects of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the radiology workplace.

## OBJECTIVE

- (1) To determine the extent to which gender discrimination and sexual harassment are experienced by female radiologists and trainees
- (2) To examine whether experiencing harassment or discrimination influences perceptions of gender parity
- (3) To explore whether the existence of either formal institutional policies or the number of women in the workplace and/or in leadership positions influences perceptions of having achieved gender equity

## METHODS

An online anonymous survey was developed through an Association of University Radiologists (AUR) – affiliated 2019-2020 Task Force and used to assess participant demographics, perceptions of gender parity, and experiences of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The project was IRB-exempt.

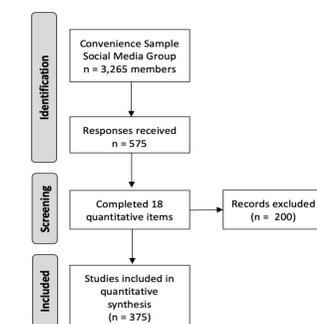


FIGURE 1 (above). Selection of survey participants.

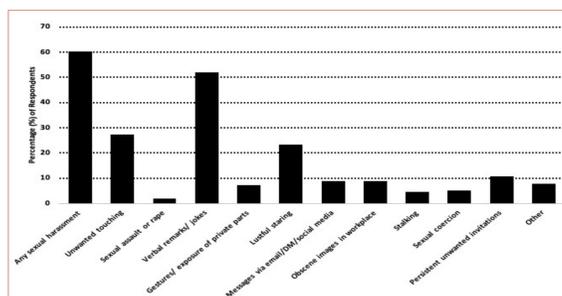
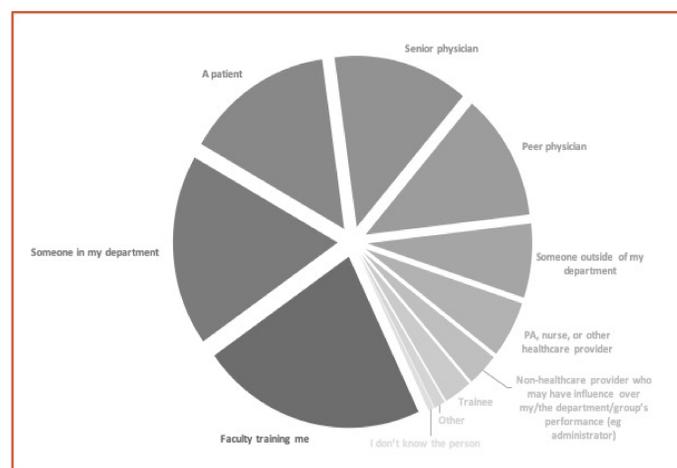


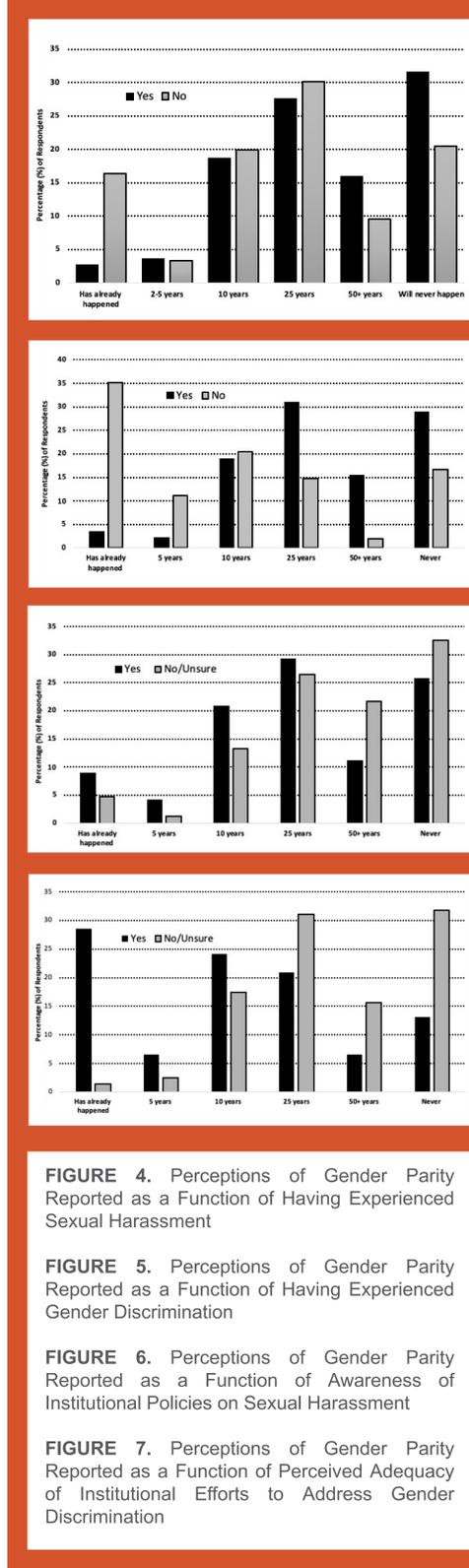
FIGURE 2 (below). Types of harassment.

FIGURE 3 (right). Harassment perpetrators.



## RESULTS

- The selection process for survey participants is indicated in Figure 1.
- 84.8% of respondents reported having experienced gender discrimination in their workplace
- 60.3% of respondents reported having experienced sexual harassment in their workplace (Figure 2)
- Sexual harassment perpetrators were predominantly faculty (53.1%), followed by another member of the radiology department (43.4%), and patients (35.0%) (Figure 3)
- 79.6% of respondents who experienced sexual harassment did not report the event
- 87.5% of respondents estimated that parity will take longer than 10 years to achieve
- Respondents who experienced sexual harassment were overall more pessimistic ( $\chi^2(5, n=371)=27.69, p<.001$ ) and more often believed achieving gender parity would either take > 50 years to achieve or would never be achieved (Figure 4)
- Respondents who had experienced gender discrimination had less optimistic attitudes toward gender parity than those who had not ( $\chi^2(5, n= 371) = 81.0, p<.001$ ) (Figure 5)
- Awareness of institutional policies in place to address sexual harassment was significantly associated with more optimistic perceptions of when parity will be achieved ( $c^2(5, n= 371) = 11.6, p<.04$ ) (Figure 6)
- Perception of adequate institutional attention to gender discrimination was similarly significantly associated with an optimistic perception of parity in the workplace,  $c^2(5, n= 371) = 82.9, p<.001$  (Figure 7)
- Expectations of gender parity were significantly associated with the percentage of women in leadership positions ( $p<.001$ ) and with percent of female radiologists in one's practice ( $p=.004$ )



## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

- Gender discrimination and sexual harassment remain potent and pervasive issues within the field of radiology
- Such experiences can negatively affect professional self-esteem, confidence, collegiality, career satisfaction, and contact with colleagues, as well as increase likelihood of burnout, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and adverse patient outcomes
- Victims of workplace gender discrimination and/or sexual harassment espoused a more pessimistic outlook regarding achieving gender equity than those who had not
- Presence and number of formal institutional policies aimed at preventing either gender discrimination and sexual harassment, as well as higher percentages of female colleagues and women in leadership positions, were associated with more positive outlooks regarding achieving workplace gender parity
- Small steps towards improving the workplace experience include increasing representation of women radiologists at all levels, implementing adequate institutional training policies addressing discrimination and harassment, ensuring department-wide understanding of reporting policies and procedures, confidentiality following event reports, thorough and fair investigation of reports, and appropriate retribution for perpetrators
- We can foster change by challenging discriminatory social norms in our workplaces and addressing biases

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