

Background:

This survey aimed to uncover the impact of a challenging specialty like emergency medicine on female emergency physicians in Egypt.

Patients & Methods :

An anonymous questionnaire was run among 20 female emergency physicians working at different sectors and cities; such as Alexandria main university hospital, Suez canal university hospital, Tanta university hospital, ministry of health and private sector.

The questionnaire was composed of 15 questions including; age, years of experience, work place, number of days spent at work, clinical hours worked per day, the reasons behind choosing emergency medicine, income satisfaction, marital status, effects on social life, challenges faced daily, and which gender is coping more with the stress of emergency medicine.

In addition, the work opportunities available for female emergency physicians in our country, how they see the future of the specialty and finally, if they ever thought of career shift.

Moreover; a place for comments was added to give them a space to write down any idea or challenge not highlighted in the questionnaire

Results:

Actually, inspite of the small sample size, but results were surprising and at some points shocking. Ages ranged between 26 up to 35 years, average years of experience were 5.7 years with a range from 1 to 10 years. average number of work days was 4 per week with a range between 3 up to 7 days per week, average working hours per day was 12 with a range between 5 hours up to 24 hours per day. Interestingly, 65% chose emergency medicine because they are passionate about saving lives, 35% because it was the only specialty matching their grades at medical school, 30% because of short contact with patients and finally, 20% because it gives good work opportunities abroad. 60% stated that their income is totally unsatisfactory, very undue to the effort paid and not correlating with life demands.

55% of the physicians included were married, 40% were single and 5% were divorced. Unfortunately, 95% stated that emergency medicine affected their social life negatively through many reasons, 70% where losing

contact with their family and friends, being always nervous with their partners in 25%, and losing bond with their kids in 20%.

In 25% other painful impacts were stated, such as losing feminine character, being always exhausted and depressed, feeling careless even in catastrophs, never enjoying spare time, and inability to sleep well because of dreaming of their patients. Regarding the challenges faced daily, stress counted for 85% followed by workplace violence in 55%, and under estimation of female physicians, plus underestimation of the whole specialty in 20%. Surprisingly, 75% stated that stress management is not a gender issue, and 55% think that work opportunities are equal among both genders, but due to the small number of emergency physicians generally in Egypt. Luckily, 40% think of career shift when stressed only, 30% never thought and 30% always think. Finally, inspite of challenges, 65% see a progressing future.

Discussion:

Although stressful and tough, emergency medicine is a passion. More concern should be paid to female physicians to avoid burnout.