

MIND THE GAP DISCRIMINATION AND MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES AMONG FEMALE PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

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Gender matters and has an impact, and it is intended to encourage readers to think about this important issue in clinical practice, education, research, and a wider context of public health¹. Due to the dearth of gender theoretical knowledge that has been discovered within the field of physiotherapy, there are still many difficulties that women must overcome in today's world of gender equality and feminism for women's rights². Historically, women are predominated in the physiotherapy profession, although this has gradually changed throughout the years³. According to Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) data for both practicing and non-practicing physiotherapists, the gender split changed from 76% female to 24% male to 74% female to 26% male between 2017 and 2020. Although women make up more than 50% of the physiotherapy workforce globally, they make up fewer than 50% of executive positions in national physiotherapy associations³.

Evidence of gender discrimination in health care industry revealed a significant issue known as the “leaking pipeline,” in which women is unfairly awarded top positions or higher ranks in the health industry since more men than women currently own practices, hold more managerial or administrative roles, hold more teaching appointments, and have higher earnings⁴. The inadequate and stressful work environment that significantly contributes to the burnout phenomena among female professionals is another difficulty faced by females⁵. Nearly 46% of female medical professionals were unsatisfied with their employment positions as a result of the unfavorable influence imposed by their family responsibilities, which is a result of the family interfering with the work pledge. The anticipation of professional patterns linked to family commitments may also be related to gender disparities in income expectations⁶.

Regardless of expected practice location or position, men expected higher incomes due to a greater expectation of full-time continuous employment, whereas women expected more part-time employment and more time off for family obligations⁷. Although physical therapy is a female-dominated field, women matriculating into professional physical therapy appear to have lower career goals than men. The delivery of physiotherapy services across all sectors should be taken into account by the physiotherapy profession in light of this shift in gender⁷.

As a profession, we increasingly require a sufficient female workforce with the range and depth of knowledge necessary to treat patients with a variety of chronic illnesses in the public and

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private sectors. Therefore, fostering diversity and gender equality can favor not only an effective patient care and satisfaction but also contentment of health care provider particularly females. A promising trend toward gender studies in the discipline of physiotherapy can be recognized, and it should be promoted to expedite the growth of knowledge in the field^{5,7}.

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