

“Improving gender-role attitudes of Japanese physicians in academic hospitals”

Makiko Arima⁽¹⁾, Miyoko O. Watanabe⁽²⁾, Sachiko Iseki⁽¹⁾, Nobuhide Hirai⁽¹⁾, Yasunari Miyazaki⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾Tokyo Medical and Dental University ⁽²⁾ Japan Science and Technology Agency

Aims and Objectives

This study investigated factors related to openness towards improving gender-role attitudes of Japanese physicians in academic hospitals. Identifying those factors could promote improvements in the clinical field’s gender-role attitudes and workplace diversity.

Methods

A cross-sectional, self-administered questionnaire was distributed to medical school alumni of Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Tokyo, Japan in 2011. A sample of 2,159 individuals was assembled, 536 returned the questionnaire. After excluding unemployed physicians and graduate students, 454 participants were assembled.

Results

Of all participants, 72.0% of female physicians and 54.9% of male physicians agreed with improving gender-role attitudes in academic hospitals. Chi-square tests were performed for demographic characteristics with “openness towards improving gender-role attitudes in academic hospitals”. Logistic regression was performed stratified by sex. Both male and female physicians who agreed with providing career education on life events to young physicians were more likely to show greater openness towards improving gender-role attitudes than those who disagreed.

Table 1. Questionnaire items on gender-role attitudes in academic hospitals

Outcome measures	Level of agreement with statements	Options for responses
Openness towards improving gender-role attitudes	I agree that academic hospitals should improve gender-role attitudes.	1. Fully agree 2. Somewhat agree 3. Somewhat disagree 4. Fully disagree
Openness towards providing career education to young physicians	I agree that academic hospitals should provide career development education on life events to young physicians.	
Openness towards extending work-term appointments for childrearing	I agree that academic hospitals should extend work-term appointments for childrearing.	
Openness towards optimizing adequate work hours	I agree that academic hospitals should optimize adequate work hours.	
Demographic information	Gender, Marital status, Spouse’s occupation, Having Children, Years after graduation, Types of hospital, Current position, Average weekly work hours, Average number of night shifts per month, Annual income, Licensed Specialist, Specialty.	

Table 2. Demographic characteristics and openness towards improving gender-role attitudes in academic hospitals

Characteristic (N = 454)	N	%	p value (* < 0.05, ** < 0.01)
Sex	Female	108 of 150	72.0
	Male	167 of 304	54.9
Having Children	Yes	182 of 318	57.2
	No	93 of 136	68.4
Providing career education on life events to young physicians (N = 452)	Non-Agree	39 of 107	36.4
	Agree	234 of 345	67.8
	Data Missing	2	
Optimizing adequate work hours (N = 453)	Non-Agree	20 of 46	43.5
	Agree	254 of 407	62.4
	Data Missing	1	
Extending work-term appointments for childrearing (N = 452)	Non-Agree	16 of 48	33.3
	Agree	257 of 404	62.4
	Data Missing	2	

Table 3. Logistic regression analysis: openness towards improving gender-role attitude in academic hospitals, by sex

		Female (N=150)				Male (N=304)			
		OR	p value	95% CI		OR	p value	95% CI	
Providing career education on life events to young physicians	Non-Agree								
	Agree	4.957	**0.000	2.319	12.160	3.057	**0.000	1.733	5.394
Optimizing adequate work hours	Non-Agree	NA	NA	NA	NA				
	Agree	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.624	**0.002	1.602	8.197

Conclusion

Of all factors, providing career education on life events to young physicians was considered most effective in improving gender-role attitudes for both male and female physicians. Providing information on how to manage the balance between work and family and foresee priorities throughout their lifetimes are effective methods for designing their professional and personal lives. The specific need of educational interventions should be proposed in academic hospitals.