Janice M. Newsome, MD, FSIR

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Shahrazad Azizaddini, MD, PGYS

Highlights of the WIR programming at SIR 2024

The WIR programming kicked off with an engaging session entitled “Yes, We Are Women Physicians.”

Paula Novelli, MD, FSIR, started off discussing “queen bee syndrome,” first documented in 1973 referring to women in authority treating subordinate females worse than their male peers purely on the basis of gender. These women who achieve success in male-dominated fields are more likely to oppose the rise of other women in the name of self preservation, often donning masculine traits and distancing themselves from other women in the workplace to succeed. In medicine, isolation can frequently occur, causing women to feel disconnected from peers or subordinates in the workplace. Women physicians’ challenges, such as discrimination or isolation, don’t disappear with age or seniority.

Aneesa S. Majid, MD, MBA, FSIR, talked about grit and grace. Grit means courage and determination despite difficulties, which requires perseverance and sacrifice. She talked about the importance of grit over talent. Gritty people look at life like a marathon. A positive correlation exists between grit, kindness, curiosity and empathy. Grace is the exercise of love, compassion and mercy toward another. Grit and grace should be universal for men and women. To develop grit, you must find your passion, set challenging goals, embrace obstacles, focus on progress and practice self-reflection.

Hirschel D. McGinnis, MD, FSIR, primarily discussed his article titled “The IR trainee Workforce 10 years after Becoming a Primary Medical Specialty.” In 2023, 54% of medical graduates were women. Based on the 2023 NRMP, women represented 23.6% of IR applicants. In 2021, IR had the fourth-lowest women’s representation among all specialties. Although we have been cultivating female talent in IR for a long time, we are sinking compared to other surgical specialties. One of the challenges in the growth of female representation is the flatline of female representation in diagnostic radiology, which has been going on for more than a decade. A survey of U.S. medical graduates in 2019 revealed problematic cultural aspects in the IR workplace as a reason to make IR undesirable. We need to learn from other surgical specialties that outpaced us in recruiting women in their field.

Philip D. Orons, DO, FSIR, concluded with discussing an international survey in 2014 that examined why women are not choosing IR. The reasons include work-life balance, call schedule, being too competitive, radiation exposure and working in a dominant environment.

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