Women in IR news

Spring 2021

WIR at SIR 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting

On March 21, 2021, educators in IR came together to discuss the state of women in IR as part of the SIR 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting. Despite the challenges of virtual interactions this year, presenters capitalized on the opportunity to capture an audience and inspire them to take on the challenge of succeeding in a male-dominated specialty. Several outstanding presenters spoke on their experiences in leading and diversifying radiology, contributing to the overall inspirational energy of the session.

A team of volunteers, led by Paula Novelli, MD, FSIR and Daniel B. Brown, MD, FSIR, developed fantastic programming to highlight some of the most pressing and actionable points affecting the professional engagement of women in IR. This included the “gender gap” within IR as well as some of the barriers women face as IRs, including finding mentorship, interacting with other colleagues, and navigating cultural and generational differences. “We certainly recognize that issues of gender equity, diversity, inclusion, and wellness in healthcare and in the workplace resonate with many. We want to encourage and support more women training in IR and hope that we answered questions so others recognize how rewarding our role can be in a traditionally male-dominated field,” said Dr. Novelli of the program.

While accepting the inaugural Women in IR Champion Award, Meridith J. Englander, MD, FSIR, said, “It really takes a village to accomplish what we’ve done,” emphasizing the importance of support in success. She went on to discuss the challenges she faced when entering the specialty as a young woman with uncertainty about career trajectory and radiation safety. She recalled the early beginnings of the Women in IR Section and emphasized persistence saying, “Giving us an opportunity does not take away their opportunity,” pushing for professional equity alongside the support of male colleagues. During her Women in IR InspiRed lecture, Geraldine McGinty, MD, discussed “being a first” and cited important leadership lessons. “We have to get more comfortable talking about our ambitions and having it be okay for us to be ambitious,” she says — words to recall in pushing past boundaries and championing success for all women in IR.

Alda L. Tam, MD, FSIR

Dr. Alda Tam is a practicing interventional radiologist at MD Anderson with a focus on interventional oncology with outside interests in international travel, reading, and constantly being exposed to new ideas and ways of doing things. Her passion for learning from different industries and sectors helps her to continuously improve her own practice and patient care. Dr. Tam has had many influential mentors in her career, including M. Victoria Marx, MD, FSIR, and Sue E. Hanks, MD, FSIR, during her residency at the University of Southern California, who showed her how interventional radiology was a fun, exciting and impactful service that provided meaningful care for patients.

Most importantly, she realized the interventional radiologists she worked with as a trainee were people she could see herself working with for the rest of her career. When asked about advice she would give to her younger self, Dr. Tam responded, “Early on in your career, it’s important to always be open to opportunities; don’t immediately discount or say no to something that you’ve never considered before.”

Connect with WIR  @womenirads  |  WIR Section  |  WIR RFS