

# Gender biases in Nephrology: a 2022 survey of female Nephrologists

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## INTRODUCTION

- While the percentage of women physicians has increased over the past decade, they have not experienced commiserate growth in holding leadership positions. In Nephrology, there is a paucity of female leaders represented as professors or presidents of professional associations. While the underlying cause of this incongruity remains unclear, heightened focus on gender gap in leadership has led to the creation of task forces focused on addressing this disparity.
- Here we describe results from a survey of female nephrologists aimed at identifying opportunities and perspectives on how to more effectively bridge the current gender gap in Nephrology.

## METHODS

- An electronic survey was distributed to female nephrologists across the country (n=1785). Questions included demographic information, perceptions of barriers to leadership roles, mentorship experience, equitable pay and confidence in achieving gender equality.

## RESULTS

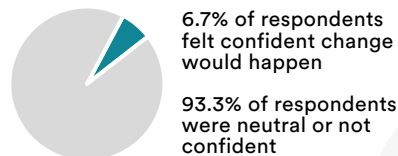
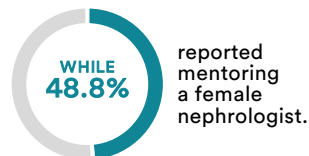
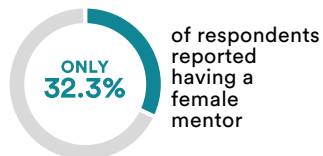
- Results from 59 respondents (3.3% overall response rate) were analyzed. Most were above the age of 45 (66.1%), Caucasian (59.3%), worked in a hospital setting (54.2%) and less than 16 years of experience (50.8%) (See Table 1).
- Top barriers to gender equality were the need for better work-life integration (75%) and cultural environment of the workplace (75%). Only 32.3% of respondents reported having a female mentor, while 44.8% reported mentoring a female nephrologist. Using a Likert scale, only 6.7% of respondents felt confident change would happen, while the remaining 93.3% of respondents were neutral or not confident (See Table 2).

**Table 1. Female Nephrologist Demographics**

	Characteristic	Responses (n=59)
Age, y	<35	5.1% (3)
	36-45	28.8% (17)
	46-55	33.9% (20)
	>55	32.2% (19)
Race	Asian / Pacific Islander	25.4% (15)
	Black or African American	5.1% (3)
	White / Caucasian	59.3% (35)
	Not Reported	10.2% (6)
Years in Practice, y	0-9	16.9% (10)
	10-15	33.9% (20)
	16-20	8.5% (5)
	>21	40.7% (24)
Practice Specialty	General	61.0% (36)
	Pediatrics	15.2% (9)
	Transplant	13.6% (8)
	Research	8.5% (5)
	ICU / Critical Care	1.7% (1)
Practice Location	Hospital	54.2% (32)
	Private	30.5% (18)
	Government	1.7% (1)
	Other (Academic, HMO)	13.6% (8)
Geographic Location (U.S.)	Central	35.6% (21)
	Northeast	25.4% (15)
	Northwest	1.7% (1)
	Southeast	15.3% (9)
	Southwest	22.0% (13)

**Table 2. Female Nephrologist Survey Results: Top 3 Responses per Question**

Question		Responses (N=59)
What do you perceive the barriers to gender inequality? (check all)	Need for better work-life integration	74.6% (44)
	Cultural environment of workplace	74.6% (44)
	Gender Bias	64.4% (38)
Have you had a mentor in Nephrology? (check all)	I have/had a <b>male</b> mentor	55.9% (33)
	I have/had a <b>female</b> mentor	32.2% (19)
	I have <b>not had</b> a mentor	32.2% (19)
Have you mentored a colleague in Nephrology? (check all)	I have a <b>female</b> mentee	44.8% (26)
	I have <b>not had</b> a mentee	37.9% (22)
	I have a <b>male</b> mentee	17.2% (10)
What are barriers in gender equity in compensation? (check all)	Lack of advocating for higher wages	30.5% (18)
	Involvement in home life / caregiver roles	25.4% (15)
	Gender bias	18.6% (11)
How confident are you that there will be significant improvement in the current gender inequality in nephrology leaders in the next 5 years?	Extremely confident	1.7% (1)
	Very confident	5.1% (3)
	Somewhat confident	47.5% (28)
	Not very confident	39.0% (23)
	Not at all confident	6.8% (4)



6.7% of respondents felt confident change would happen

93.3% of respondents were neutral or not confident

## CONCLUSION

- Created to better discern the current state of gender inequality in Nephrology, our survey results from this cohort suggest that women in Nephrology are not confident that current efforts to address this inequality will close the gender gap that exists. Broader initiatives are needed to address work life integration and workplace environment to more effectively brig this disparity to resolution.