Careers in Academic Medicine: Evaluation at Gatekeeping Junctures

Molly Carnes, MD, MS
Professor, Depts of Medicine, Psychiatry, and Industrial & Systems Engineering
University of Wisconsin-Madison
AAMC Benchmark Data, 2005-06

Medical students: 49% (33% in 1985; 21% 1975)
Residents: 43%
   IM: 22% (42%), Peds: 16% (67%); Ob/Gyn: 9%(74%);
   Ortho: 1% (11%)
Full-time faculty: 32%; 17% full profs; 38% assist profs
   5% AA, 4% H, 0.1% NA, 13% Asian
Dept chairs: 102 basic science (avg 1/school); 174 clinical
   (avg 1/school)
Deans at US Medical Schools: 11/125, <10%
Are women physicians “leaking out?”

Deans at top 25 medical schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year med school graduation</th>
<th>1971 (1960-1981)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% women MDs graduating 1971</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% women deans (N=2)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dept Medicine Chairs at top 25:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year med school graduation</th>
<th>1974 (1965-1984)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% women MDs graduating 1974</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% women chairs (N=0)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What about geriatrics?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discrete Geriatrics Section or Division at top 25, N=16</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year med school graduation</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% women chiefs or heads of geriatrics (N=3)</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% women MD geriatric fellows 1980</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Study of Internal Medicine Manpower
What Do Women Want?
Basically the same thing men want

• More protected research time
• More institutional support
• Better clarification of expectations of employment
• Improved feedback

Broaddus & Feigel, Chest 105:1858, 1994
WHY?
Attacking the issue with the tools of our trade:
Research and evidence-based action

• Gather data on numbers – AAMC benchmarking, pay equity evals, %women faculty at ranks locally
• Survey perceptions of reasons for lack of advancement - numerous studies tell a consistent story
• Turn to research methods and findings from other fields
"Are you just pissing and moaning, or can you verify what you're saying with data?"
WISELI.engr.wisc.edu

click on Library; extensive annotated bibliography
What is “unconscious bias”

- Unconscious bias and assumptions
- Previously held beliefs about a social category
- Schemas
- Stereotypes
- Mental models
- Cognitive shortcuts
- Statistical discrimination
- Implicit associations
- Spontaneous trait inference

The tendency of our minds to judge *individuals* based on characteristics (real or imagined) of *groups*
Background: Gender and Behavior

DESCRIPTIVE: How men and women actually behave
PRESCRIPTIVE: Unconscious assumptions about the way men and women in the abstract “ought” to behave:
- **Women**: Nurturing, communal, nice, supportive, helpful, sympathetic
- **Men**: Decisive, inventive, strong, forceful, independent, “willing to take risks”

RELEVANT POINTS:
- **Leaders, scientists, pioneers**: Decisive, inventive, strong, independent
- **Social penalties** for violating prescriptive gender assumptions
- **Unconscious gender assumptions** are easily and automatically activated and applied
Language can activate assumptions about a social category
Semantic priming activates unconscious gender stereotypes

- Unrelated exercise: unjumble sentences where actions reflect dependent, aggressive or neutral behaviors; e.g.:
  - P alone cannot manage a
  - M at shouts others of
  - R read book by the

- “Reading comprehension” experiment with Donna or Donald engaging in dependent or aggressive behaviors

- Rated target on series of traits (Likert, 1-10)

• Gender of target determined influence of semantic priming:
  – **Neutral primes** – Donna and Donald same
  – **Dependent primes** – only Donna more dependent
  – **Aggressive primes** – only Donald more aggressive

Time pressure and high cognitive load enhance application of unconscious assumptions
Evaluation of Police Officers Engaging in Competent and Incompetent Behaviors

- 202 undergrads (77 male, 125 female)
- Subjects randomly assigned to 1 of 8 experimental conditions (2x2x2 factorial):
  - Male or female version of police officer’s performance
  - Hi or low attentional demands (concurrent task demand and time pressure)
  - Hi or low memory demand

Ratings:
- Competence, job performance, potential for advancement, likely future success → work performance scale
- Adjective scales of gender-related attributes (e.g. dominant-submissive, strong-weak) → composite score

• No effect of evaluator sex
• No impact of memory demand on evaluation
• *Low attentional* demand:
  – Men and women comparable
• *High attentional* demand:
  – Work performance
    • Men higher than women
    • Women same
    • Men higher than men under low attentional demand
  – Gender-related characteristics
    • Men more stereotypically masculine
    • Women same

In a traditionally male job, ambiguous performance criteria or evaluation based on “potential” cause evaluators to fall back on unconscious assumptions and consistently disadvantages women.
Ambiguous performance criteria in traditionally male jobs favors evaluation of men: “glass escalator”

- 48 subjects (20 men)
- Job description; Assist VP; products made suggested male (e.g. engine parts, fuel tanks). Male and female rated in two conditions:
  - Performance clear
  - Performance ambiguous

Achievement-related Characteristics:
- Unambitious - ambitious
- Passive - active
- Indecisive - decisive
- Weak - strong
- Gentle - tough
- Timid - bold
- Unassertive - assertive

Competence Score:
- Competent - incompetent
- Productive - unproductive
- Effective - ineffective

Interpersonal Hostility:
- Abrasive - not abrasive
- Conniving - not conniving
- Manipulative - not manipulative
- Not trustworthy - trustworthy
- Selfish - not selfish
- Pushy - accommodating

Likeability:
- Likeable - not likeable
  - How much do you think you would like to work with this person?
  - Very much - not at all

Comparative Judgment:
- Who is more likeable?
- Who is more competent?
Results

• **Performance clear**
  – Competence comparable
  – Achievement-related characteristics comparable
  – Women less liked
  – Women more hostile

• **Performance ambiguous**
  – Likeability and hostility comparable
  – Men more competent
  – Men more achievement-related characteristics
• **Study 2** – women only less liked in male gender type jobs
• **Study 3** – Likeability and competence independently linked to recommendation for organizational rewards

*Only women were deemed unlikeable for being competent at their job!*
Evaluators can re-construct the value of identical accomplishments to get the hire that aligns with assumptions.
Redefining Merit to Justify Discrimination

• Mock hiring situation – 3 studies
• Male and female applicants with identical credentials confirmed by ratings
• Police Chief – criteria constructed to favor male applicant, sign. for male evaluators
• Women’s Studies Professor – criteria constructed to favor female applicant, sign. for female evaluators
• Self-perceived objectivity predicted gender bias

Uhlman and Cohen, 2005
Fig. 2. Results from Experiment 1: the interaction of applicant’s gender and self-perceived objectivity in predicting biased criteria. Low self-perceived objectivity is defined as one standard deviation below the mean; high self-perceived objectivity is defined as one standard deviation above the mean. Higher numbers indicate greater favoritism toward the applicant.
Redefining Merit to Justify Discrimination

- Half of the evaluators rated importance of criteria before seeing applications (commitment vs no-commitment)
- No-commitment: Criteria constructed to favor male applicant
- Commitment: Male and female applicants – similar hiring evaluations

Conclusion: To prevent the unconscious re-construction of merit to favor the person they want to hire, agree on criteria before seeing any applicants.

Uhlman and Cohen, 2005
Presence of a member of a social category can influence behavior through “social tuning”
Social influence effects on automatic racial prejudice

• Series of experiments measuring automatic prejudice
• Significant interaction of results with race of experimenter (less anti-black prejudice with black experimenter)
• When given instruction to avoid prejudice, further reduction in anti-black automatic prejudice

Progress in an Academic Career: Gatekeeping Events

- Prestigious research awards
- Hiring into a faculty position
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Real Life Example:
Swedish Postdoc study

- 114 applications for prestigious research postdocs to Swedish MRC (52 women)
- Reviewers’ scores vs standardized metric from publication record = impact points
- Women consistently reviewed lower, especially in “competence”
- Women had to be 2.5x as productive as men to get the same score
- To even the score, women needed equivalent of 3 extra papers in a prestigious journal like Science or Nature

The graph shows the competence score plotted against total impact points for men and women. The competence score increases with the total impact points for both genders, with men generally showing a higher competence score across all impact point categories.
NIH Director’s Pioneer Award: Real life example of activation and application of unconscious bias?

- First NIH Roadmap initiative to be rolled out
- Intended to accelerate innovative research unsupported through traditional NIH funding mechanisms
- $500,000/yr for 5 years
- Drew from all institutes
- New protocol for submission and review
- None of 9 awarded first round were women

Carnes, et al. JWH, 2005
Potential Pool of Women Applicants

Women earn:

- 45% PhD’s in biological sciences
- 20% HHMI awards
- 50% MacArthur genius awards
- 25% of R01 applicants
- 23% of all NIH grants
Subsequent Review Cycles

• 2005: 6 out of 14 women (43%)
• 2006: 4 out of 13 women (31%)

Were women doing better science after 2004 or were biases favoring male scientists minimized?
Male semantic primes were present in the announcement and review criteria in 2004 and were removed in subsequent rounds.
### Characteristics of target scientist and research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005, 06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk-taking emphasized:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emphasis on risk removed:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“exceptional minds willing and able to explore ideas that were considered risky”</td>
<td>“pioneering approaches”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“take...risks”</td>
<td>“potential to produce an unusually high impact”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“aggressive risk-taking”</td>
<td>“ideas that have the potential for high impact”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“high risk/high impact research”</td>
<td>“highly innovative”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“take intellectual risks”</td>
<td>URL no longer includes “risk”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL includes “highrisk”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Description of recommendations from outside consultants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005, 06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technological advances highlighted as desirable:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mention of technological breakthroughs removed; human health added:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“support the people and projects that will produce tomorrow’s conceptual and technological breakthroughs”</td>
<td>“encourage highly innovative biomedical research with great potential to lead to significant advances in human health.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social tuning to avoid anti-female bias more likely after 2004

• Huge public outcry
• Many more women present on review committee:
  – 2004: 6/64 (6%)
  – 2005: 28/64 (44%)
  – 2006: 32/79 (40%)
• Wording added to encourage women and minority applicants
Time pressure and cognitive load likely less after 2004

- 2004 – 1300 applications, unfamiliar process
- 2005 – 840 applications, more experience with process
- 2006 – 469 applications
In 2004 evaluation focused on intrinsic leadership qualities and performance criteria emphasized *potential*.
## Evaluation criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005, 06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrinsic qualities stressed:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus on intrinsic abilities removed:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Potential for scientific leadership”</td>
<td>• “Relevance of the research and impact on the scientific field and on the NIH mission”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Testimony of intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm, and intellectual energy”</td>
<td>• “Motivation/enthusiasm/intellectual energy to pursue a challenging problem.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reviewers told to look at potential for future work</td>
<td>• Reviewers encouraged to look at accomplishments as evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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- Hiring into a faculty position
- Achieving tenure
Preference for male applicants in academic settings

- 238 academic psychologists sent a curricula vitae with either male or female name
  - Entry level: more likely to vote to hire man, more likely to indicate man had adequate teaching, research, and service experience
  - High level: no gender differences
  - No differences between male and female evaluators
  - More write-in comments for women

Steinpreis, Anders, and Ritzke 1999
Subtle gatekeeping bias – letters of recommendation
Trix and Psenka, Discourse & Soc 14:191 2003

• 312 letters of rec for medical faculty hired at large U.S. medical school
• Letters for women vs men:
  – Shorter
  – 15% vs 6% of minimal assurance
  – 10% vs 5% with gender terms (e.g. “intelligent young lady”; “insightful woman”)
  – 24% vs 12% doubt raisers
  – Stereotypic adjectives: “Compassionate”, “related well…” vs “successful”, “accomplished”
  – Fewer standout adjectives (“outstanding” “excellent”)
Semantic realms following possessive (e.g. “her training”; “his research”)
Distinctive semantic realms following possessive
Progress in an Academic Career: Gatekeeping Events

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Bias in Evaluation of Leadership/Competence

“Think-manager-think-male phenomenon”

Prescriptive Gender Norms

- **Men**
  - Strong
  - Decisive
  - Assertive
  - Tough
  - Authoritative
  - Independent

- **Women**
  - Nurturing
  - Communal
  - Nice
  - Supportive
  - Helpful
  - Sympathetic
Evaluation of Leadership/Competence

• Students seated around the table—when is the head of the table identified as the “leader?”

Porter & Geis 1981
MALE

M3
M2
M1

SAME-SEX STIMULUS GROUPS

X² = 21.25, p < 0.001

M1 M2 M3 M4 M5

X² = 43.75, p < 0.001

M2 M3 M4 M5 M1
FEMALE

\[ X^2 = 35.36, p < 0.001 \]
\[ X^2 = 39.45, \ p < 0.001 \]

\[ X^2 = 31.50, \ p < 0.001 \]
Characteristics of Effective Leadership – is there a basis for the prejudice favoring male leaders?

- Transformational **
- Transactional
- Laissez-faire
Are Men better Leaders than Women?

- Metanalysis of 45 studies measuring leadership effectiveness – Eagly et al., 2002
- Leadership effectiveness of 16 male and 6 female deans – Rosser et al., 2003

Conclusion: little difference between men and women. When differences emerged, women exhibited more transformational and men more laissez-faire leadership behaviors.
“Leader” in tenure criteria

- 25 top research academic medical centers
- Tenure criteria from websites
- Scanned for “Leader”
- Also scanned for other Bem Sex Role Inventory male, female, neutral words
- Slopes of regressions for annual % faculty who are tenured women x 7 years
- “Leader” = OR 6.0 (1.02, 35.37; p=0.04) for slope below median compared to those without

Carnes et al. 2007
Stereotypically male traits valued for tenure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defends</td>
<td>Inefficient</td>
<td>Yielding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Truthful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Med 5.5/school; 2-50
Total 183

4 schools
Total 5

3 schools
Total 3
Conclusions

• Even the most well-intentioned person committed to gender equity has unconscious biases about social categories.

• These assumptions can disadvantage women at gatekeeping junctures in fields traditionally occupied by men such as academic medicine.
Recommendations

• Acknowledge that we all have biases and assumptions
• Examine language and other processes at gatekeeping junctures in the context of research from social psychology
• Continue to raise awareness of the fact that:
  – “fixing the women” is not enough to achieve gender equity
  – With women comprising 50% of the pipeline, we cannot afford a system that utilizes only half of the potential talent in academic medicine