

Gender and the Radiology Workforce: Results of the 2014 ACR Workforce Survey

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Abstract

Purpose: As part of the 2014 ACR Human Resources Commission Workforce Survey, an assessment of the gender of the U.S. radiologist workforce was undertaken. Radiologist gender in relation to type of practice, work location, leadership roles, and full- versus part-time employment have not previously been assessed by this survey.

Methods: The survey was completed by group leaders in radiology identified through the Practice of Radiology Environment Database.

Results: The response rate to the survey was 22%, representing 35% of all practicing radiologists. The survey found that 78% of the radiology workforce is male, and 22% female. Among the men, 58% work in private practice, and 18% in the academic/university environment; among women, percentages were 43% and 31%, respectively. Of all physician leads, 85% are men, 15% women. Of the full-time radiologists, 15% of men are practice leaders compared with 11% of women.

Conclusions: Fewer women than men are in private practice. More women than men practice in academic/university environments. Among part-time radiologists, there are more men than women, but significantly more women work part time than men. Women are in the minority among practice leaders.

Key Words: Gender analysis employment, radiologist employment by gender, radiologist workforce

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INTRODUCTION

For the past several years, the Human Resources Commission of the ACR has conducted a workforce survey to identify the makeup of current practices by geographic area, type of practice model, and subspecialty area of expertise. In addition, the survey has sought to determine the numbers and types of subspecialists that practice leaders are planning to hire. For the first time, in the 2014 ACR Human Resources Workforce Survey, questions were asked regarding the gender makeup of the present workforce. The current article reports these survey findings.

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METHODS

As previously described in articles reporting the ACR Human Resources Workforce Survey methodology [1-3], the Practice of Radiology Environment Database (PRED) was used to distribute an electronic survey to the 1,936 identified group leaders in January 2014. Group leaders were defined as chairs, vice chairs, executives, and board members. Included in the survey for the first time were questions related to the gender makeup of the workforce, as well as the full- and part-time status of the radiologists employed in these practices. In addition, group leaders were asked to report the gender of the physicians in their group leadership structure. This electronic survey was sent only to the identified head of the group, and each group had a unique username and password. The survey was distributed January 15, 2014 with a requested completion date of March 15, 2014. Questions specific to gender were practice location, practice type, work schedule, and role in practice.

RESULTS

Responses were received from 426 group leaders (22%). A total of 10,845 radiologists were represented, corresponding

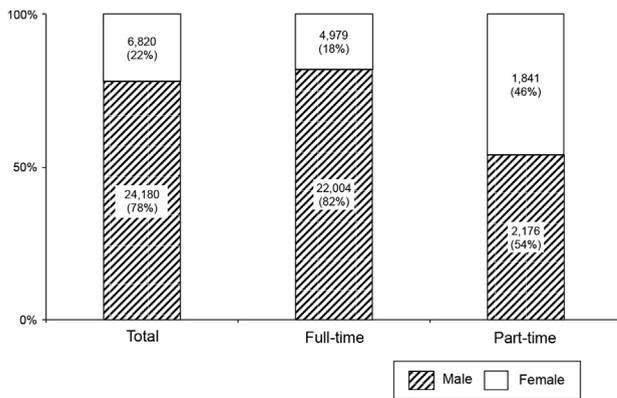


Fig 1. 2014 ACR Workforce Survey results: percentage distribution of radiologist gender by full- and part-time employment.

to 35% of all practicing radiologists in the United States [3]. Of these practicing radiologists, 78% are men and 22% are women. Of those practicing full time, 82% are men and 18% are women (Fig. 1).

Part-Time Work

Of those represented in the survey who work part time, 54% are men and 46% are women (Fig. 1). Among the men, 91% practice full time, 9% part time. Among the women, 73% practice full time, 27% part time (Fig. 2). The difference between the percentages of these women and men who work part time is statistically significant ($P < .01$).

Practice Location

Location of practice was defined according to the PRED as described in previous publications [1-3]. The difference in regional distribution of practice locations between men and women was not statistically significant (Fig. 3). The largest percentages of women work in the South and the Midwest.

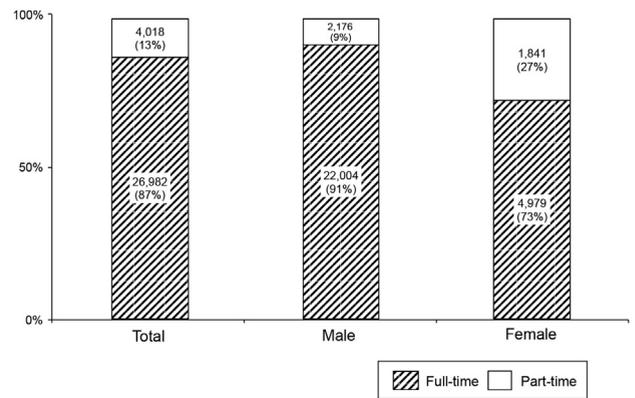


Fig 2. 2014 ACR Workforce Survey results: percentage distribution of full-time and part-time radiologists by gender.

Practice Type

A total of 58% of men and 43% of women represented in the survey work in private practices. Eighteen percent of men are in academic/university practices versus 31% of women. The percentages of women and men working in other practice types are shown in Figure 4. The difference between women and men with respect to practice type was statistically significant.

Leadership

With regard to leadership roles, whether chair, president, vice chair, or board members of their radiology groups, 15% are women, and 85% are men. Of the full-time male radiologists, 15% are practice leaders compared with 11% of full-time female radiologists. However, among the total number of practicing radiologists, 10% of the women are in leadership roles compared with 17% of the men. This difference is statistically significant, with $P < .01$.

DISCUSSION

Responses to the 2014 ACR Human Resources Commission Workforce Survey revealed that the majority of the

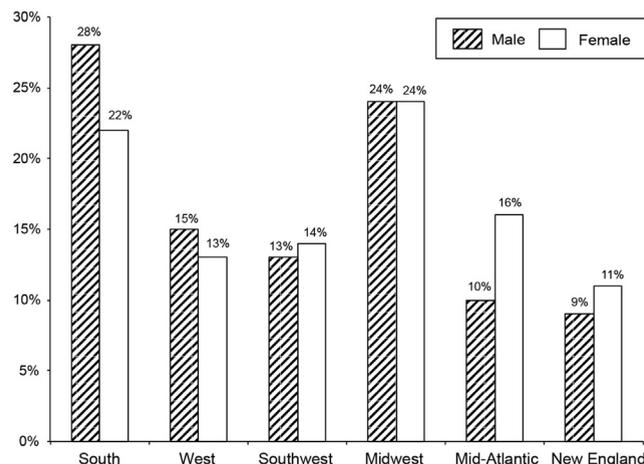


Fig 3. 2014 ACR Workforce Survey results: percentage distribution of radiologist gender by region.

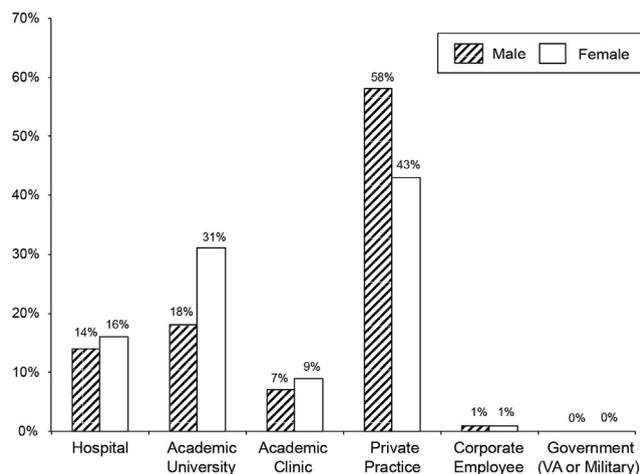


Fig 4. 2014 ACR Workforce Survey results: percentage distribution of radiologist gender by practice type.

radiology workforce is made up of men, and that women more often work in academic practices and part time in all practices. These results are similar to those of the ACR survey published in 2007 by Lewis et al, indicating that women's status has changed little during the past decade [4]. Approximately 22% of women within the medical field choose radiology as a career. This choice has been found to be correlated with the desire for direct patient contact, dislike of the physics requirement, and competition for residency positions [5]. The role of student loans in the choice of specialty also needs to be considered and understood better to see if this influences the choice of radiology.

Because the current cadre of radiologists graduated from medical school when women were less well represented, it is possible that the number of female radiologists will increase as male colleagues retire. More women work in academic practices, though the role of gender in this difference may be secondary to the benefits of a flexible schedule that allows for childcare and other family responsibilities, or to a desire to contribute to the academic mission. Other factors, including hiring preferences of private practice groups, need to be studied further.

With regard to leadership roles in practices, the survey found that 15% of all leaders are women compared with the 22% makeup of the total workforce. This area is complex; gender differences may reflect the fact that a much larger number of women work part time and therefore might not be considered for leadership positions in any practices. The question of financial parity by gender was not studied, as none of the questions included in our annual survey were related to salary or financial issues. However, financial parity is an area of great importance and will be further evaluated by the Commission for Women and General Diversity.

This survey represents the first attempt by the ACR to report using the PRED on the number of women in

its membership and their representation in practice type, part-time work, location in the United States, and leadership roles. The Commission for Human Resources and the Commission for Women and General Diversity will continue to explore the complexities of the education pipeline, hiring practices, and salary issues. It is hoped that by understanding this information, the specialty of radiology can be made more attractive to all who are deciding on a medical specialization.

TAKE-HOME POINTS

- Of all radiologists, 22% are women, and 78% are men.
- Of all part-time radiologists, 46% are women, and 54% are men.
- Fewer women than men are in private practice.
- More women than men practice in academic/university environments.
- Of practice leaders within radiology, 15% are women, and 85% are men.

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