Reviewer’s report

Title: The perceived organizational impact of the gender gap across a Canadian Department of Medicine and proposed strategies to combat it: a qualitative study.

Version: 0 Date: 09 Dec 2017

Reviewer: Carol Bates

Reviewer’s report:

This publication is very clearly written and provides helpful qualitative information on the gender gap. Since it is reporting on a single institution, the authors should provide more information on the state of the gender gap in the institution as readers will not be able to access the unpublished data that are referenced.

The interview guide focuses a number of questions on divisions, but the authors don’t describe their efforts to recruit subjects across divisions nor the distribution of divisions represented by those interviewed. That would seem more important than the distribution across hospitals which is described. I would ask that they describe which divisions were represented, and importantly which divisions were not represented, since the gender distribution historically has varied dramatically (as alluded to in the comparison made by authors between rheumatology and cardiology). The snowball sampling method may have limited diversity of opinion which should be acknowledged as a limitation.

The authors should describe the distinction between Clinician-Teacher and Clinician-Educator and also between Clinician-Investigator and Clinician-Scientist as these are not obvious. The discussion section focuses on Clinician-Teachers but makes no mention of Clinicain-Educators; wouldn’t the points made apply to both groups? Alternatively, I wonder if these categories could be combined. More importantly, it appears that faculty who are investigators without any clinical footprint were excluded from the study? That should be acknowledged as a limitation. If promotion processes vary substantially across these subcategories, that might be acknowledged and the local promotion criteria might be referenced.

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