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**Innovations in Health
Professions Education and
Career Development**

This category encompasses all projects designed to enhance the health professional pipeline and includes curricular models, mentoring efforts, career development programs or activities, and institutional programs for women in science and medicine.

Abstract title: A multi-level intervention to advance the careers of women in academic medicine

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Background

Women in academic medicine are not reaching the same levels of career advancement, compensation, and leadership as their male counterparts. Of the many issues that impede their success, one critical factor is the culture of the work environment.

Objectives

We conducted a cluster-randomized controlled trial in a school of medicine (SOM) to determine whether an innovative, multi-level intervention was feasible and could demonstrate promise in changing the culture of academic medicine and the success of women assistant professors.

Methods

Twenty-seven departments/divisions were randomly assigned to control (N=14) or intervention status (N=13). The multi-level intervention included: 1) women assistant professor participation in an innovative leadership program, a manuscript writing course, and other professional skills seminars; 2) structured faculty-led task forces which instituted local interventions in work practices, policies, mentorship, and cultural norms; and, 3) engagement of senior leaders.

Results

Each intervention component of the trial was implemented with support from the Dean and senior leadership. The supportiveness of work culture varied significantly by department. Among women assistant professors, two major factors associated with increased intention to quit were low work culture scores and increased levels of work family conflict. However, a supportive work culture ameliorated the effects of work overload and long work hours on work-family conflict.

Conclusions

This was the first randomized trial to implement a multi-level intervention involving an entire SOM. We found consistent and strong evidence that a supportive work culture appears to buffer women faculty from the negative impacts of work overload and work family conflict.

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