

Gender, Race, and Ethnicity of Faculty and Department Chairs in Orthopaedic Surgery and Comparable Fields

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INTRODUCTION: Orthopaedic surgery has disproportionately low numbers of women and under-represented minority (URM) groups. Even as this representation grows within orthopaedic surgery, the increase has not kept up with comparable surgical specialties. The purpose of this study was to determine: (1) How does the representation of women and URM faculty members and department chairs in orthopaedic surgery compare to other fields of medicine? (2) What are the trends in how gender and racial breakdown in faculty positions have changed in orthopaedic surgery and other medical fields between 2015 and 2020?

METHODS: This is a retrospective review of data obtained from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) report regarding United States medical school faculty and department chair makeup in 2018, 2019, and 2020, as well as 2015 data from the AAMC Group on Women in Medicine and Sciences (GWIMS) reports. Data regarding the gender and race/ethnicity of faculty and department chairs in orthopaedic surgery, a comparable surgical specialty (otolaryngology), general surgery, and clinical science as a whole were assessed.

RESULTS: Among orthopaedic surgery, otolaryngology, general surgery, and all clinical sciences, representation of women and individuals from URM groups increased between 2015 and 2020. Orthopaedic surgery had the lowest growth rate of the four groups in women faculty (+0.75%/year to 20% in 2020), women department chairs, (-0.34%/year to 5% in 2020), and faculty from URM groups (+0.23%/year to 22% in 2020). However, orthopaedic surgery had an increase in URM department chairs on par with general surgery and all clinical sciences (+1.01%/year to 11% in 2020) (Table 1).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: The increase in representation of women and URM orthopaedic surgery faculty and department chairs continues to lag behind comparable fields and medicine as a whole. Between 2015 and 2020, there was a smaller increase in both female and URM orthopaedic surgery faculty and department chairs than in otolaryngology, general surgery, and all clinical sciences. Increasing the number of women and URM among orthopaedic faculty and leadership will encourage medical students in these groups to pursue a career in orthopaedics, thereby helping to improve diversity in the field. Annual growth rates for female and URM faculty and department chairs

Group	Women faculty	Women chairs	Faculty from URM groups	Chairs from URM groups
Orthopaedic surgery	0.75%	1.01%	0.23%*	-0.34%
Otolaryngology	0.88%	0.28%*	0.60%*	1.24%*
Surgery	0.93%	1.01%	0.35%*	1.59%
All clinical sciences	0.82%	1.01%	0.37%*	0.92%

URM: under-represented minority

*: not statistically significant at significance level of 0.10.