



Gender and Generations: Anticipating Changes in Physician Expectations

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Generations Defined

- Silent generation – born 1925-42 (81-62)
- Baby boom – born 1945-62 (61 to 44)
 - ~77 million
- Gen X – born 1963-77 (29-43)
 - ~44 million
- Gen Y – born 1978-1994 (12-28)
 - ~70 million



Demographic Changes

- More Gen X and Gen Y physicians
- Increasing women
- Reduced influence of silent generation and baby boomers



Critical Questions

- How are demographic changes likely to influence projected physician workforce shortages?
- What changes can be made to enhance contributions of women physicians from these generations?



Current Physician Culture

- Baby boomers and retiring silent generation
- Characteristics: work hard, challenge authority, leadership from paying dues, seek personal gratification, believe in responsible life balance
- Work reduction and retirement imminent



Facts: Change is Coming

- Over 50% of MD's age 50-65 plan to reduce hours or retire in next 3 years.
- Physicians over 50 believe younger MD's don't work as hard.
- Gen X is here.
- Gen Y is entering the work force.



Gen X'ers

- Characteristics: skeptical, unimpressed by authority, independent, resourceful, technologically competent, reluctant to commit, free agent career approach, change tolerant
- Wants: Flexible schedules, work-life balance NOW



Gen X'ers in Medicine

- Controllable life style specialties chosen by men (45%) and women (36%)
- Delayed child bearing: over 45% of highly educated women have first child after age 30
- Seek part-time reduced work after training



Current status

- Limited part-time residencies (3.8%)
- Accommodation by request
- Reduced work schedules (3-4 days per week) well accepted in many organizations
- Increasing stay-at-home moms (anecdotal reports)



Resident Focus Groups

- Child bearing delayed by many
- Child care is the BIG issue
- Most married to MD's
- More IMG women have children
- Accept traditional role as family caregiver; some stay-at-home dads
- Surprised that it is difficult to work, have children, and have personal time



Resident Focus Groups (2)

- Expect flexible work and careers
- Will trade money for flexibility
- Specialty choice influenced by life style perceptions
- Seek jobs in supportive organizations, not private practice
- Concerned about emotional impact of work on family life



Gen Y (Nexter's)

- Characteristics: Cautious, family-oriented, collective and team oriented, optimistic, speedy, believe in instant communication, technology dependent, E-learners, not detail oriented
- Wants: flexibility and options, non-linear paths, “a life, not a career”, more than 3 children



Current Status

- Don't delay childrean
- Increased use of maternity leave
- More residents/students are parents
- Specialty choice based on life style perceptions



Student Focus Groups

- Highly intentional
- Seeking information and making choices
- Family first is a given
- Reject specialties that will not accommodate; don't want to be "forgiven"



Student Focus Groups

- Looking for guidance
- Anticipate career interruptions
- Want part-time training and job sharing
- Plan on working less and earning less
- Don't want MD husbands or stay-at-home dads
- Plan to share equally in child-rearing



Implications for Planning

- Gen X and Gen Y have similar desires for flexible career options and “life” outside of work.
- Without adaptation, workforce shortages will be exacerbated.
- Technology may be a way to leverage physician contributions.



Children: The Big Issue

- When
- How many?
- Day care vs parental care?
- Nannies vs mommies and daddies?



Organizational Changes

- Medical school and residency programs should lengthen duration and reduce intensity of education/training.
- Candidates will select positions based on coherence of values.
- Technology will be key.
- Specialties that fail to adapt will have greater shortages.



Organizational Changes

- Physician practices/organizations will have to allow reduced hours to attract new members.
- Career interruptions will need to be integrated into organizational expectations.
- Baby boomer leadership will need to value Gen X and Gen Y contributions.



Take Home Message

- Change is coming.
- Time is now.
- The organization that adapts to the needs of the Gen X and Gen Y physicians is the one that will win and retain new employees.