



PRESS RELEASE

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CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF PHYSICIAN-SCIENTISTS DOING KIDNEY RESEARCH IN THE UNITED STATES

Current workforce includes more women and international medical graduates.

Highlights

- The physician-scientist workforce doing kidney research in the United States is increasingly made up of women and international medical graduates.
- However, this workforce is older, declining in relative number, and is less overwhelmingly focused on basic rather than clinical science.

Washington, DC (July 14, 2021) — U.S. physician-scientists make enormous contributions to biomedical research. New research published in *CJASN* demonstrates increasing representation of women and international graduates within the physician-scientist workforce doing kidney research; however, this workforce is declining in relative number, is getting older, and is less overwhelmingly focused on basic science research.

The research relied on public data obtained from the internet. A team led by Susan M. Wall, MD (Emory University School of Medicine) mined records from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to explore demographic changes of early career and established, physician and non-physician principal investigators doing kidney-focused NIH-funded research between 1990 and 2020.

The researchers found that kidney-focused principal investigators are aging, particularly among physicians. Moreover, the relative representation of physicians among both early career and established principal investigators is falling, particularly among those doing basic science research. In contrast, the number and relative representation of non-physician scientists is increasing. There is also greater representation of women and international graduates among physician and non-physician kidney-focused investigators; however, women physician-scientists are increasingly more likely to do clinical rather than basic science research.

“Physician-scientists are in a unique position to formulate testable hypotheses that are clinically relevant. Research training also provides a perspective that is useful when evaluating human disease in the clinic,” said Dr. Wall.

Study co-authors include Delaney C. Abood, Spencer A. King, and Douglas C. Eaton.

Disclosures: D.C. Eaton reports receiving honoraria from National Institutes of Health and University of Pittsburgh; patents and inventions with Monograph "Vander's Renal Physiology" McGraw Hill Publishing; and serving as a scientific advisor or member of Editorial Boards of *American Journal of Physiology-Renal Physiology* and *APSselect*. S.M. Wall reports owning stock in Abbott, Becton Dickinson, Johnson and Johnson, Merck, Roche, and Thermo Fisher; S. M. Wall does not have any stock options. S. M. Wall reports serving as an American Physiological Society representative to the FASEB Finance Committee.

The article, titled "Changing Demographics of NIDDK-Funded Physician-Scientists Doing Kidney Research," will appear online at <http://cjasn.asnjournals.org/> on July 14, 2021, doi: 10.2215/CJN.02440221.

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Since 1966, ASN has been leading the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. ASN has more than 21,000 members representing 131 countries. For more information, visit www.asn-online.org.

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