

CCME 2020 – Vancouver

Abstract Submission Deadline: Friday September 6th, 2019 (11:59PM PDT)

Title: Understanding gender-based needs in rural physician mentoring programs

Authors: Stephanie Gariscsak, MSc; Jenna Lightbody, BA; Bob Bluman, MD; Brenna Lynn, PhD.

Background: Existing literature highlights attributes of successful physician mentorship programs. However, limited research explores women’s experiences as a rural physician, and gender-related pressures. This study aims to investigate the role of a formal mentoring program in supporting female rural physicians in their development of successful mentoring relationships.

Methods: To date, 110 physicians practicing in rural British Columbia have been enrolled in a formal eight to ten month mentoring program developed by UBC CPD. Mentors and mentees participated in post-program activities in which they reflected on their experiences with the program and its impact on relationship-building, personal and professional satisfaction, as well as integration in rural BC. Surveys have been analyzed using thematic analysis and phenomenology.

Results: 53 mentees completed the survey. Three themes emerged from surveys amongst female mentees: demands of having a young family, maintaining work-life balance, and gendered mentor preferences. Female mentees were twice as likely to specify preference for a female mentor in comparison to male mentees preferring a male mentor. Female mentees were 3.5 times more likely than men to request support from a mentor with a married family status, and female mentees were 5 times more likely than men to request a mentor who could specifically assist them in maintaining work-life balance.

Conclusion: Rural physician mentorship programs that acknowledge gender-based challenges can improve and create solidarity amongst rural female physicians. Our findings will inform the design of future mentorship programs and initiatives responding to the unique needs of rural physicians.