

Working Together to Advance Women in Nuclear Medicine

Leonie Gordon, MD, Suzanne E. Lapi, PhD, Carolyn Anderson, PhD, and Sally W. Schwarz, RPh, MS, BCNP, for the SNMMI Committee on Women in Nuclear Medicine

The Committee on Women in Nuclear Medicine (WINM) organized a very successful program on June 12 at the SNMMI Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA. A continuing education program on “The Power of Mentoring” was organized by Cathy Cutler, PhD, and moderated by Suzanne Lapi, PhD. The session helped attendees understand the value of mentoring in career development and overall job satisfaction. The success of mentoring hinges on development and establishment of a good mentor–mentee relationship and an understanding that not all relationships are beneficial to the mentor or mentee. Sally Schwarz, RPh, MS, BCNP, SNMMI president, discussed her career in leadership development and included personal vignettes to emphasize the value of mentorship. Vani Vijayakuma, MD, showed metrics that can be used to enhance these relationships. The panel discussion was useful in describing best practices and challenges women have faced in finding mentors who care about their career development and help them become involved in rewarding leadership opportunities.

The program was followed by an afternoon tea at which tables featured various topics of interest to professional women in different career stages. These included balancing family and career, finding a job in the United States, hiring lab members, and changing job positions at later stages in life. During the day, much successful networking occurred, and the enthusiasm expressed by many participants was infectious. What makes this group unique is the mix of women from different backgrounds and countries and from industry, academia, and clinical practice. Earlier in the day, an open committee meeting was held at which many women expressed their thoughts and ideas on what needs to be done moving forward to ensure that women have more visibility and the potential to become leaders in SNMMI and the field of nuclear medicine.

In order for this committee to be successful, we must be more active between meetings and serve as a resource for problem solving when asked by other members. Women have gender-unique issues, such as radiation exposure during pregnancy, which often cause anxiety, especially among residents and other trainees. Work/life balance is a concern to many of our members, despite the fact that traditional



Attendees enjoyed presentations, discussions, networking, and more at the June 12 Women in Nuclear Medicine meeting.

roles are changing so that both partners have time constraints and must balance a productive career with the challenges of running a home. A dual-career marriage requires a constant search for equity from both partners; the equilibrium between marriage and career must be constantly evaluated, and the priorities may continually change within the marriage/career structure. I am excited that many of our international women members participated in the program and are interested in creating satellite groups in their countries. We currently have a web-based book club, as well as a Twitter account, where we hope to publish the achievements of our members. Please let us know about any accomplishments and achievements so that we can all celebrate these successes (gordonl@musc.edu).

We hope the formation of the WINM Committee has allowed SNMMI women to have useful continuing education programs and networking opportunities to enhance both their professional and personal lives. We will continue to have our own voice in SNMMI as we grow. Judging from the interest and enthusiasm shown by attendance at the WINM program at the SNMMI Annual Meeting, we are sustainable and will investigate all opportunities for leadership and growth for our members.