

SNMMI Committed to Promotion of Women in Nuclear Medicine

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In 1898, Marie Curie discovered 2 radioactive elements: polonium and radium. In 1935, Irène Joliot-Curie and her husband received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for the synthesis of new radioactive isotopes. In 1959, Rosalyn Yalow, PhD, and her colleague made a breakthrough discovery with the radioimmunoassay technique. Today, women continue to expand on the foundation these pioneers built, innovating the fields of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging for the betterment of public health.

Here at SNMMI, we are committed to promoting women physicians and scientists in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. We aim to help foster the development of professional interests, address challenges encountered in practice, promote equitable treatment, and raise awareness of the scientific contributions of women in nuclear medicine. However, these successes have not come without challenges. Professional women often experience conscious and unconscious biases. National surveys indicate women face inequality in opportunities, salary, and leadership roles, to name a few.

The society is not exempt. SNMMI has had an extremely limited number of women presidents. Men far exceed women in membership numbers. Moreover, not a single woman is in a leadership capacity in the current SNMMI Value Initiative.

In 2014, during my time as SNMMI Scientific Program Committee chair, I had the opportunity to sit down with my colleagues, Tiffany Olson, MS, and Hank Chilton, PharmD, MBA, to discuss ways to better support women in nuclear medicine. At the same time, Leonie Gordon, MBChB, was also developing ways to engage women in the society and foster growth. These efforts were ultimately united and resulted in the creation of SNMMI's Women in Nuclear Medicine (WINM).

WINM supports women in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging by promoting leadership and career development, addressing common issues women experience in the field, and improving the climate for women in nuclear medicine in all stages of their careers. WINM understands that gender equity and diversity bring greater value to the society and make us a stronger community. Yet, these efforts can be further expanded. As president, I would like to see more opportunities for women in SNMMI. This, of course, cannot be a passive act; it must be a conscious effort to create more opportunities for women in the society. Women in the society should be encouraged to speak up and take more leadership roles. By the end of my presidency, I would like to move the needle of gender equality in the SNMMI community.

Despite our commitment, this change will not happen overnight; it will take years of dedication. But it is time to start. SNMMI leadership has already begun to take steps in the right direction, having conversations with the American Association for Women Radiologists to recognize outstanding women leaders in the field and to learn how to best engage more women in the society and in the field of nuclear medicine.

These efforts will benefit the entire society. So, please join me in continuing to support our women colleagues as they continue to make significant and long-lasting contributions to the future of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging.



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