

## Work-life Balance in Academic Medicine: Influences, Trends, and Change

Rebecca Harrison MD FACP  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Oregon Health & Science University  
Division of Hospital Medicine  
Portland, Oregon  
OHSU Faculty Refresher Course  
September 9, 2010

## Value Clarification Exercise

- If I could focus on one thing in my life and only one thing, what would it be?
- If I could add a second thing what would that be?
- A third?
  - What needs to change?
  - Anything holding me back?
  - Who are the “stake holders” to dialogue with?
  - Who can help me achieve this?
  - How can I make small but meaningful changes?

## The Many Roles We Balance

Partner  
Parent  
Family member

Hobbies/interests  
Passions  
Spirituality  
Self Care  
Community



Physician  
Teacher  
Learner  
Scholar  
Researcher

## Objectives

- Define work-life balance and understand it's relevance
- Explore societal, generational and gender-related approaches to work-life balance
- Understand why balance is important for individual physicians, medical centers and the profession of medicine
- Explore ways to promote work-life balance for you and for OHSU
  - Linda Strahm – OHSU Human Resources Dept
  - Discussion

### What is work-life balance?

- Individualized
- Fluid
- Like happiness.. nebulous
- Work and non-work responsibilities
  - energized and productive
- Priorities and values
  - respected and realized
- Personal and professional growth
  - optimized

### Work-life balance: Unrealistic?

- *No Such Thing as Work-life Balance*
  - The Wall Street Journal 7/09
- “Managing energy” - balancing priorities that energize you
  - McKenzie Study 2009
- *Work for the great majority of human adults is part of life so would not "work-non-work balance" be more to the point?*
  - an MD blogger

### Work-life Balance

- Defined by its absence or by the opposite of work-life conflict
  - Work-life conflict exists when the role pressures from work and family are incompatible
- Predictors of work-life conflict
  - Pressure to perform and high personal investment in work
  - Family domain-children at home, high demands from family, tension with spouse/partner

Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) Work-Family Role Pressure Incompatibility

### Applying to Our Daily Lives as Academic Physicians

Work roles as doctor, teacher, researcher, resident, student...



Outside work roles and responsibilities

- Parent, Partner, Family Member
- Friend
- Self-care
- Personal/Group interests and activities

## One MD's Opinion on Work-Life Balance

- However, in my opinion, the balance that is more important to strike for happiness/contentment/wellbeing is the balance between "doing for others" and "doing for self".
- It's all about me AND others. I need to know that I am in a job for me and for others. I also need to remember that I am in a family for me and for others. This is the balance that we strive for.

— Ann of Fam Med 2008; 6:171-172

- "I found that as I've managed staff, the more flexibility and opportunities that I gave them to be good parents, the more commitment that they made to working with me, the less likely they were to leave because they wouldn't find the same sort of situation somewhere else..So this isn't just about family balance. This is about making work places stronger and more effective, and keeping and attracting the most qualified people. This research is critical to empowering employers and is politically -- particularly important during our current economic climate.

Michelle Obama  
New York Times 2009

## Growing Interest in Work-Life Balance

- Google- 50 millions links
  - Websites, consultants, workshops, articles
- *Balance: The New Workplace Perk* Forbes.com 3/07
- *Balancing Life and Job Become a Matter of Choices* Baltimore Sun 8/07
- *Work-life balance – How do you do it?* New York Times 1/08



## From Marcus Welby To Grey's Anatomy: The Next Generation



- Survey of US physicians under 50 yrs,
- Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and American Medical Association
- Quality of Life is Essential
  - 71% polled identify family and personal time - very important factor in practice
  - 2 out of 3 young physicians not interested in working longer hours for more money
  - 13% of doctors under 50 currently work part-time and an additional 32% would prefer part-time hours

## Important Factors in a Desirable Practice: Physicians Under 50

% Very Important

<b>Time for family/personal</b>	<b>71%</b>
Adequate support staff and services	43%
Long term income potential	42%
Practice income	39%
<b>Flexible scheduling</b>	<b>37%</b>
Health insurance coverage	35%
No or very limited on-call	31%
Adequate patient volume	30%
Opportunity to advance professionally	28%

Source: AAMC 2006 Survey of Physicians Under 50

## Time for family and personal life very important to young physicians, especially women physicians

Percent "Very Important" to Physicians Under 50

BALANCE	Male	Female
Time for family/personal life	66	<b>82</b>
Flexible scheduling	26	<b>54</b>
No / limited on call	25	<b>44</b>
Minimal practice mgmt resp	10	<b>18</b>
<b>CAREER/INCOME</b>		
Practice income	<b>43</b>	33
Long term income potential	<b>45</b>	36
Opportunity to advance professionally	29	27

Source: AAMC/AMA 2006 Survey of Physicians Under 50

## Time for family and personal life very important to young physicians, especially women physicians

Percent "Very Important" to Physicians Under 50

BALANCE	Male	Female
Time for family/personal life	66	<b>82</b>
Flexible scheduling	26	<b>54</b>
No / limited on call	25	<b>44</b>
Minimal practice mgmt resp	10	<b>18</b>
<b>CAREER/INCOME</b>		
Practice income	<b>43</b>	33
Long term income potential	<b>45</b>	36
Opportunity to advance professionally	29	27

Source: AAMC/AMA 2006 Survey of Physicians Under 50

## Not interested in working more hours to earn more money

- Willing to work longer hours for more pay  
**66% NO**
- Would reduce hours if could afford to  
**80% YES**
- Currently working/interested in part-time hours  
**43% YES**

Source: 2006 AAMC Survey of Physicians Under 50

## From Marcus Welby To Grey's Anatomy: The Next Generation

- In the next 20 yrs 1 in 3 US doctors are likely to retire
- Treating 71 million baby boomers
- Experiencing / heading into a physician shortage

## Impact of Physicians Working Fewer Hours?

- Job Structure - Job sharing, part-time work, and flexible schedules must become more common
- Team based patient care - Medical education will need to focus on interdisciplinary training with nurses, pharmacists, and other health professions
- Technology - Information technology, electronic medical records and emails between physicians and patients, will need expansion to maintain continuity of care

Dr Darrell Kirch President and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges

## Your Brain on Computers – New York Times Series



-Digital Devices Deprive Brain of Needed Downtime

-Outdoors and Out of Reach, Studying the Brain

-Attached to Technology and Paying a Price



-An Ugly Toll of Technology: Impatience and Forgetfulness

"People seem to find it hard to shut down after work. Almost 40 percent check work e-mail after hours or on vacation"

## Predictors of Physician Career Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, and Burnout

- US survey of 2,000 MDs, multiple specialties deemed "uncontrollable lifestyle"
  - Obgyn, gen IM, gen surg, peds, family medicine
- Scale to measure work-life balance
  - Conflict between work and personal life
  - Missing social obligations because of work
  - Worrying about issues at work when home
  - Having home activities interrupted by work
  - Experiencing household tension because of work

Keeton et al, Obstet Gynecol 2007;94:9-55

### Predictors of Physician Career Satisfaction, Work-Life Balance, and Burnout

- Strongest predictor of work-life balance and burnout
  - Control over schedule and hours worked
- Gender, age, and specialty not strong predictors of career satisfaction, work-life balance, or burnout
- Physicians can feel “unbalanced” in personal lives but still highly satisfied in work

### Response to work-life conflict

- Work-life policies
  - Flex-time, part-time, job-sharing
  - On-site childcare
  - Telecommuting
  - On site phone / personal counseling
- Benefits
  - Recruitment and retention
  - Increased loyalty
  - Increased productivity
  - Decreased absenteeism

Alliance for Work-life Progress, <http://www.awlp.org/awlp/home>

### Effect of part-time practice on patient outcomes

- Retrospective study of patient care practices of part-time and full-time MDs
- Outcomes
  - Cancer screening rates
  - Diabetes management
  - Patient satisfaction
  - Ambulatory costs

Parkerton PH et al. J Gen Intern Med. 2003;18:717-724

### Effect of part-time practice on patient outcomes

- No differences in patient satisfaction and costs between part-time and full-time MDs
- Part-time MDs better cancer screening rates and diabetes management
- Other studies showing similar results

Parkerton PH et al. J Gen Intern Med. 2003;18:717-724

## Objectives

- Define work-life balance and understand it's relevance
- Explore societal, generational and gender-related approaches to work-life balance
- Understand why balance is important for individual physicians, medical centers and the profession of medicine
- Explore ways to promote work-life balance for you and for OHSU

## Work Culture Influences in US Academic Medical Centers

- The culture of medicine
- Societal Influences – “ideal worker”
- Changes
  - gender
  - generational values
  - training choices
  - work hours
  - recruitment environment
  - work environment

## Culture of Academic Medicine More than a Just a Job...

– *The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade; a calling, not a business: a calling in which your heart will be exercised equally with your head*

–Sir William Osler

– Complete dedication to one's career over personal needs.



## Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to do about it

- Existing work structures rely on “ideal worker”
- Good jobs typically assume an ideal worker who is willing and able to work full-time for 40 years straight, taking no time off for childbearing or childrearing. *This ideal is framed around...men's life patterns. ...many mothers find it difficult, if not impossible, to meet this standard, and the assumption that workers are supported by a flow of childcare and other family work from their spouses that many men enjoy, but most women do not.*
- “Proportionality principle”
  - Less than full time work options

Williams, J. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2001.

## Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to do about it

- “principle of proportionality”
- *offer high-quality work on reduced hours schedules that offer slower, but still steady, advancement, as well an equal pay rate and proportional benefits... keeping in mind that in many workplaces 40 hours per week would qualify as part-time*

Williams, J. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2001.

## Re-defining the “Ideal Worker” in Academic Medicine

- Flexible time and less-than-full-time options should be explored and evaluated by each department and institution
  - Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) Part time Career Proposal
- Job Sharing
  - Residency Training
  - Staff Clinical Work
  - Educational and Administrative Roles

## Re-defining the “Ideal Worker” in Academic Medicine: Research Careers

- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) a new policy concerning career development K awards and part-time institutional appointments.
- The policy allows K award recipients to reduce their appointments to less than full-time in consideration of personal or family circumstances

<http://www.im.org/PolicyAndAdvocacy/PolicyIssues/Research/NIH/Pages/NIHAnnouncesNewPolicytoSupportPart-timeKAwardees.aspx>

## Re-defining the “Ideal Worker” in Academic Medicine: Research Careers

- National Institute of Health Institute and Office of Research on Women's Health July 2004  
“Assistance program for research grants to support individuals with high potential to reenter an active research career after taking time off to care for children or attend other family responsibilities”

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-04-124.html>



## Re-defining the "Ideal Worker" in Academic Medicine: Research Careers

- Competitive award program at Mass General Hospital
- Modest amounts of flexible research funding for junior faculty responsible for care of family

Jagsi R et al Archives of Internal Medicine. 167(4):343-5, 2007

## What's Changing in the US Medical Centers?

- gender
- generational values
- training choices
- work hours
- recruitment environment
- work environment

## When more women are doctors?

- Increased work-life conflict
- Increased number of "dual physician families"
- Impact on academic careers
  - Women faculty with children report slower career progression
  - Women physicians more likely to make career changes to accommodate family
  - Lack of role models with shared personal and professional values

## Generational Diversity

- Each generation strongly influenced by the economic, political and social events of the time
  - Values, professional identity, and work ethic
- Recognition of differences important for workplace dynamics

## Work Characteristics by Generation

Baby Boomers (1945-59)	Generation X (1960-1981)	Millennial (1982 to present)
Work hard out of loyalty	Work hard if balance allowed	Techno-savvy
Self-sacrifice considered a virtue	Occasional willing to endure self-sacrifice	Diversity, teamwork and change valued
Respect authority	Question authority	Uncomfortable with formality

## The Generation and Gender Shifts in Medicine: an Exploratory Survey of Internal Medicine Physicians

- How do Baby Boomer and Generation X physicians perceive the generation shift in physician's work attitudes and behaviors?
- Qualitative interviews with 54 physicians single DOM with follow up survey
- Predominant theme
- Greater emphasis on work-life balance

Jovic et al. BMC Health Services Research 2006, 6:55.

## The Generation and Gender Shifts in Medicine: an Exploratory Survey of Internal Medicine Physicians

- Quantitative data suggests that there are few significant differences in the generations' reports of work-life balance, work hours ( ~ 61 hrs/week), and attitudes toward patient care
- More similar than they realize

## Objectives

- Define work-life balance and understand it's relevance
- Explore societal, generational and gender-related approaches to work-life balance
- **Understand why balance is important for individual physicians, medical centers and the profession of medicine**
- Explore ways to promote work-life balance for you and for OHSU

## Why is balance important?

- Individuals
- Medical Centers (MCs)
- The medical profession

## Why is balance important- individuals?

- Physicians reporting greater control over work hours report higher life and job satisfaction
- Lack of workplace control associated with increased burnout
- Dissatisfaction and burnout
  - Poor health outcomes for physicians
  - Decreased quality of care for patients
  - Loss of work force

## What do we know about burnout in the United States?

- 3 dimensions
  - emotional exhaustion
  - depersonalization
  - sense of lack of personal accomplishment

Linzer M Archives of Inter Med. 2009;10:169

## What do we know about burnout?

- More common among women physicians and solo practitioners
- Found among generalists and subspecialists
- Less common with part-time and flexible work practices
- Less burnout with work control, work-home balance, and home support

Linzer M. JAMWA. 2002;57:191-193

## Why is balance important?

- Individuals
- Medical Centers (MCs) and practices
- The medical profession

## Why is balance important- AMCs and the Medical Profession?

- Recruitment and Retention
  - Students focus on “lifestyle” in career choice
  - Less intention to leave job among physicians reporting control over work hours and schedule
    - 1 MD lost costs institution \$250,00 - \$400,000
- Productivity
  - Decreased productivity when work-life conflict high
  - Inflexible work environments discourage diversity
- Patient care
  - Patient satisfaction and quality of care



## Why is balance important- AMCs?

- Multiple roles in academia
  - Clinical, Research, Education, Administration, Mentorship...
- Fluctuations in workload-grants, clinical care, residency and fellowship recruitment...
- Culture of work-intense commitment to career
- Personality - “do it all”



## Objectives

- Define work-life balance and understand it's relevance
- Explore societal, generational and gender-related approaches to work-life balance
- Understand why balance is important for individual physicians, medical centers and the profession of medicine
- Explore ways to promote work-life balance for you and for OHSU

## Promoting work-life balance

- Work and non-work responsibilities
  - energized and productive
- Priorities and values
  - respected and realized
- Personal and professional growth
  - optimized

## Personal Balance

- Flexibility, Working less hours
- Value clarification
- Mindfulness
- Meaning or Fulfillment
- Other Strategies

## Strategies to Prevent Physician Burnout in PCP's

### Personal

Articulating personal values and choices  
 Spending time with family and friends  
 Religious or spiritual activity  
 Self-care (nutrition, exercise)  
 Adopting a healthy positive philosophical outlook  
 A supportive spouse or partner

### Work

Control over environment: workload  
 Finding meaning in work  
 Setting limits  
 Having a mentor  
 Having adequate administrative support systems

Anderson et al JAMA. 2002;288:1447-1450.

## Promoting work-life balance-Individuals

- Clarify values
  - If I could focus on one thing in my life and only one thing, what would it be?
  - If I could add a second thing what would that be?
  - A third?
- Prioritize and organize around your values
  - Recognizing what is most important may make it easier to say no to unimportant tasks
  - Have “stake holder” dialogues
  - Avoid making decisions in high stress situations
- Priorities change over time, reevaluate regularly
- Make small but meaningful changes

### Another approach to Value Clarification Appreciate Inquiry

- Take a moment to think of a time when you were most balanced or fulfilled?
  - What was the context?
  - How did you organize your priorities and activities and why?
  - What about you made this possible?

### Promoting work-life balance- Individuals Mindfulness

- Being fully present and attentive to the moment, to the person, and to the task at hand

The Power of Now – Tolle, E. New World Library; 1999

### Mindfulness training and burnout, empathy, and attitudes among primary care physicians

- Physicians participation in a mindful communication program was associated with short-term and sustained improvements in well-being and attitudes associated with patient-centered care

Krasner et al. JAMA. 2009 Sep 23;301 (12):1338-40.

### Not simply “balance”



- “Balance” evokes an image of constantly seeking a physical equilibrium, a mental and emotional steadiness
- Fulfillment, meaning, and integration may be a more realistic state to strive for in our personal and professional lives

Harrison R. Medical Teacher. 2008, Vol. 30, (3): 316-18

## Promoting work-life balance Meaning in Medicine

- Faculty who focus on an aspect of meaningful work have strong inverse relationship to their risk of burnout
- Efforts to optimize “career fit” may promote physician satisfaction and help to reduce attrition among academic faculty physicians

Shanafelt et al Arch Intern Med. 2009;169(10):990-995.

## Promoting work-life balance- Individuals

- Strategies for work-life balance
  - Partner well
  - Mentors and role models
  - Objective career advice
  - Sample many strategies for balance
  - Create “margin” ( $\text{Capacity} - \text{Load} = \text{Margin}$ )
  - Outsource what provides no pleasure
  - Conquer guilt!
  - Let go of perfectionism when not important
  - Negotiate for balance – find a niche
  - Healthy limits on technology

## Work-life balance for all faculty members

- Retention rates of full-time faculty members
  - 38% left their careers in academic medicine between 1987 and 1997
    - women (40%-47%)
    - men (36%-39%)

Alexander H. The long-term retention and attrition of U.S. medical school faculty. AAMC Analysis in Brief. 2008.

## Work-life balance for all faculty members

- Recent satisfaction survey
  - only 36% of all (male and female) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the workplace culture at their medical school cultivates a supportive climate for balancing home and work responsibilities.

Bunton SA. Differences in U.S. medical school faculty job satisfaction by gender. AAMC Analysis in Brief. November 2008

## Examples of Institution Supporting Work-life Balance

- Extending the seven-year limit for promotion in an up or out system
- Requiring less evidence of productivity
- Appreciating multidisciplinary team work
- Limiting unnecessary meetings and e-mails
- Accommodate the everyday needs of faculty members; child and elder day care services

## Conclusion Work-life Balance in Medicine

- Critical to prevent burnout, retain valuable physicians, faculty, and recruit future trainees
- Individual – integrating priorities, meaning, mindfulness
- Flexible and sustainable careers that supports work-life integration

## Promoting work-life balance- MCs and the Medical Profession

- Restructure work environments and policies
  - Consider “career fit” and meaning when creating jobs
  - “Proportionality principle”
    - Less than full time work options
  - Flexible work options
  - Formalized mentoring and retention programs
  - Job satisfaction surveys that facilitate communication and understanding

## Promoting work-life balance- MCs and the Medical Profession

- Leadership and culture change
  - Recognize the prominence of balance
  - Legitimize the dialogue
  - Support role-models for balance
  - Recognize gender and generational diversity



### Questions for Discussion

- What could OHSU do to support positive change in Work-Life Balance for faculty?
- What can we as faculty do to promote positive change?

### Acknowledgments

- Society of General Internal Medicine Horn Scholar Program
  - To promote scholarship, advocacy and creativity in the balance of work, family and social responsibility
- International Research Center for Medical Education; Tokyo University, Japan
- Dr Rachel Levine - John Hopkins University