

THE AWIMS ADVISOR

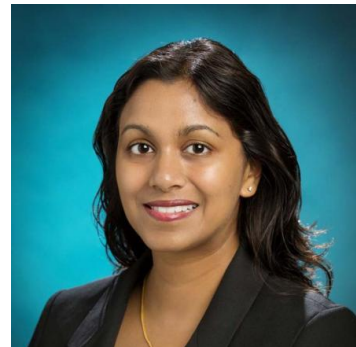
NEWS FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR WOMEN IN MEDICINE & SCIENCE

Connection and Humanity

Dear Colleagues,

AWIMS has had another productive and fulfilling quarter. Our 4th annual AWIMS conference was a great success and we continue to expand our horizons through presentations at national meetings and collaboration with fantastic groups like Brown University's Office of Women in Medicine and Science (OWIMS). I am also delighted to report that we are launching a #HeForShe initiative and have received national recognition from the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health.

Our accomplishments are notable, but what I am most proud of is how connected we remain in the midst of uncertainty and an ever-evolving pandemic. The humanity among AWIMS members and the SIU community shines on as we support and guide each other daily, recognizing the very best in one another. My heartfelt gratitude to you for all you do to keep each other and our patients safe, to our AWIMS Executive Committee and Advisory Board for their exemplary work, and to Dr. Wendi El-Amin and Dean Jerry Kruse for their invaluable support. We are one.



Vidhya Prakash, MD, FACP, FIDSA, FAMWA

Director, SIU Medicine AWIMS

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AWIMS Journal Club: Towards Health Equity and Social Justice

Mr. Joshua Crist reviews a thought-provoking article on decolonization as it relates to health equity.

By Mr. Joshua Crist

Tuesday, April 6, SIU School of Medicine's AWIMS Journal Club gathered virtually to review and discuss Chandanabhumma et al's "Towards health equity and social justice: An applied framework of decolonization in health promotion." In service of expanding the sphere of inclusivity of SIU Medicine's leadership as an anti-racist institution, this work – and our discussion – examines how health promotion initiatives can better serve people impacted by the colonial legacy. The authors propose a decolonization framework adapted for health promotion practices and practitioners. This framework is comprised of three domains: reflection, planning and action, each with two to three constituent elements, all of which are defined and described with illustrative examples. There are suggested applications of the framework in health promotion practices and a discussion that includes cautions and challenges when applying the framework.

The discussion that followed identified some difficulties in conceptualizing some of the constructs of decolonization theory. The group explored the close relationship between the authors' articulation of the colonial legacy and contemporary discourse around American legacies of racism and white supremacy. The authors suggested that "subjugation by the dominant group may result in separation from the spiritual homeland, acts of physical and mental violence, disruption of economy and dispossession of culture leading to intergenerational trauma", which the discussion participants observed bears striking resemblance to description of the experiences of many Black Americans.

Primary Citation

Chandanabhumma, P. P., & Narasimhan, S. (2020). Towards health equity and social justice: An applied framework of decolonization in health promotion. *Health Promotion International*, 35(4), 831-840.

Note – you should be able to access this paper through your SIU SOM Open Athens account credentials.)

For Further Reading

Barker, A. J., & Pickerill, J. (2020). Doings with the land and sea: Decolonising geographies, Indigeneity, and enacting place-agency. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(4), 640-662. Downloadable [here](#).

Farmer, P. (1999). Pathologies of power: Rethinking health and human rights. *American Journal of Public Health, 89*(10), 1486-1496. (Downloadable [here](#).)

Ford, C. L., & Airhihenbuwa, C. O. (2010). Critical race theory, race equity, and public health: Toward antiracism praxis. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(S1), S30-S35. (Downloadable [here](#).)

Huntington, A., Gilmour, J., & O'Connell, A. (1996). Reforming the practice of nurses: Decolonization or getting out from under. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 24*(2), 364-367.

Mittelmark, M. B., Sagy, S., Eriksson, M., Bauer, G. F., Pelikan, J. M., Lindström, B., & Arild Espnes, G. (2017). *The Handbook of Salutogenesis*. Springer Nature. (Downloadable [here](#). Be forewarned – it is ~467 pages!)

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society, 1*(1). (Downloadable [here](#).)

Pandemic Fatigue Town Hall

Panelists discuss their personal experiences with pandemic fatigue, share strategies to cope with it, and also comment on the COVID-19 vaccine.

By Dr. Vidhya Prakash

I had the privilege of moderating a town hall discussion on pandemic fatigue on April 22nd. Dr. Dorcas Adaramola, Dr. Nitin Tandan, Ms. Jo Turley, and Ms. Kimberly Stolba shared their personal experiences with pandemic fatigue. Dr. Kari Wolf reviewed effective coping strategies including adequate sleep, mindfulness, and connection and Dr. Kemia Sarraf discussed risk-taking during the pandemic through the trauma lens. Dr. Sarraf coined the term "tridemic," referring to global trauma incited by COVID-19, violence, and isolation. Dr. Jerry Kruse addressed questions and concerns about the COVID-19 vaccination and Dr. Vidya Sundareshan shed light on COVID-19 treatment and vaccination boosters. Special thanks to all these panelists and to Ms. Rikeesha Phelon, Ms. Isabella Silveri, Dr. Christine Todd, Dr. Susan Hingle, and Dr. Wendi El-Amin who made this session possible. Please review the recording under **AWIMS videos and slides**. Resources and articles are below – thanks to Dr. Kari Wolf, Dr. Susan Hingle, Dr. Kemia Sarraf, Dr. Christine Todd, and Ms. Patrice Jones for sharing.

- [Employee Assistance Program](#)
- Memorial Emotional Support Hotline: 217-588-5509
- The GME office has a process for getting residents and fellows access to mental health care.
- SIU Psychiatry is able and willing to see anyone who needs mental health care.
- Physician support line staffed by psychiatrists that is dedicated to providing support for physicians who are hurting, struggling, or just need a place to process: <https://www.physiciansupportline.com>
- National hotline for physicians, residents, or medical students: Physician Support Line 1 (888) 409-0141
- ACP Emotional Support Hub: <https://www.acponline.org/practice-resources/physician-well-being-and-professional-fulfillment/im-emotional-support-hub>

Articles

[Your Burnout Is Unique. Your Recovery Will Be, Too. \(hbr.org\)](#)

[The Cost of Caring: Compassion Fatigue In Education – Calvalyn Day](#)

[How We Can Deal with 'Pandemic Fatigue' - Scientific American](#)

[The Ills of Pandemic Fatigue - COVID-19 - Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health \(jhsph.edu\)](#)

Why Fish Don't Exist

SIU AWIMS and Brown University's Office of Women in Medicine and Science (OWIMS) embark on an exciting collaboration, beginning with a virtual book club hosted by OWIMS.

By Dr. Vidhya Prakash

Brown University's Office of Women in Medicine and Science (**OWIMS**) hosted a fantastic book club on May 3rd. Participants discussed Lulu Miller's *Why Fish Don't Exist: A Story of Loss, Love, and the Hidden Order of Life*. Miller takes readers on a fascinating journey as she chronicles the adventures and life story of the first president of Stanford University, David Starr Jordan. A complicated historical figure, Jordan's legacy as a renowned ichthyologist is clouded by his questionable involvement in Stanford co-founder Jane Stanford's death and his key role in bolstering the eugenics movement in the United States. Initially struck by Jordan's grit and resilience in the face of setbacks and adversity, Miller begins to research his life more with the hopes of finding mechanisms to deal with her own pain. As she digs deeper, Miller discovers the darker side of a man hailed as a hero by many, as she uncovers more about the circumstances of Jane Stanford's death and hears first-hand from survivors of dehumanizing eugenics practices including involuntary sterilization.

AWIMS is honored to have been invited to the OWIMS book club and especially excited about ongoing collaboration with this amazing group. Special thanks to Dr. Katherine Sharkey, Alpert Medical School of Brown University's Assistant Dean for Women in Medicine and Science, for her enthusiasm and support.

IGNITE: Leadership Development for Mid to Late Career Women in Medicine and Science

Dr. Vidhya Prakash discusses her presentation at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Group on Diversity and Inclusion and Health Workforce Research Joint meeting.

By Dr. Vidhya Prakash

On May 6th, I had the great privilege of joining my colleagues in the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Dr. Wendi El-Amin, Dr. Christopher Smyre, and Dr. Kemia Sarraf, in presenting at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Group on Diversity and Inclusion and Health Workforce Research Joint virtual meeting.

I presented our institution's efforts to build a leadership development program for mid and late career women in medicine and science during an "Ignite" session. Each speaker was allotted three minutes to pitch an innovative initiative, followed by breakout into small groups where each speaker had the opportunity to engage with participants. It was truly a gift to hear words of encouragement from women in medicine and science from around the country and their excellent suggestions. I was also able to connect with other leaders who are developing similar programs. I am especially grateful to Dr. John Mellinger and Dr. Sookyoung Suh for their key contributions to creating the AWIMS executive leadership program and to Dr. El-Amin for her invaluable support.

Take-home points from the virtual Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) faculty development seminar

AWIMS sponsored Dr. Krati Chauhan's attendance at the AAMC faculty development seminar. In this article, she shares pearls gleaned from the conference.

By Dr. Krati Chauhan

Dear Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science (AWIMS) and SIU School of Medicine,

I am delighted to share my experience of attending the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) faculty development seminar, held virtually in June 15-17th. I will begin, with gratitude towards AWIMS for supporting me to attend the seminar.

COVID-19 Pandemic and Women in Academics

The COVID-19 pandemic increased biases and inequities that already exist in academic medicine. Some of these are pay inequity, harassment, macroaggressions, slower promotion, less recognition, questioning of their abilities, workplace inflexibility, and isolation. The COVID-19 pandemic increased caregiving responsibilities and 48% of women mentioned their institution did not provide childcare options for employees and these institution did not expand options, like onsite child-care or subsidized child-care. There was a reduction in academic productivity and research due to shifts in more caregiving. As a results of the pandemic, conferences were cancelled thus resulting in lost opportunities to speak, present work, and network. Non-COVID-19 research projects were put on hold. For every three men quoted in media coverage of the COVID 19 outbreak, only one women was quoted. Women do 75% of the world's unpaid work and COVID-19 increased women's unpaid work by two hours.

Promotion and Leadership roles for Women in Academics

There is constant attrition of women in academic medicine. As per the AAMC data from 2009-2018, 58% women are instructors, 46% assistant professors, 37% associate professors and only 25% full professors. The decline in women participation is worse in faculty leadership positions; there are 52% women and 48% men assistant deans, 47% women and 53% men associate deans, and 34% women and 66% men senior associate deans. Only 18% department chairs and 18% dean are women. More women hold junior rank positions which comes with more clinical time. The psychological toll of the increased patient care workload, longer hours of finishing patient notes and returning patient calls, checking labs and imaging results and isolation from friends and family have their unintended consequences.

Approach to promote and retain women in academics

To increase the retention of women in academic medicine, we must reduce the reliance on purely quantitative measure of productivity, like RVUs. Women make up the majority of the workforce in clinical-based subspecialties, like rheumatology, endocrinology, general internal medicine, and family medicine. There is a reliance on patients showing up for their clinical appointments to help generate RVUs. With patients not showing up, and RVUs not being generated, women physicians are asked to add extra clinics, further adding to workload and academic isolation.

To promote women in academic medicine, we must also embrace being present at the clinic as a qualitative metric instead of RVUs and also eliminate institutional comparisons between individuals. We must also permit individualized tenure and promotion timelines, expand the range of materials that “count” as scholarly products, and give merit to invitations to give talks or attend conferences that have been cancelled due to the pandemic. Other strategies to increase recognition of women are gender bias training, mentorship, sponsorship, leadership training, speaking opportunities, and appointment to editorial boards.

Strategies as individuals to navigate through change:

Resilience:

The ability to recover, adapt or bounce back from adversity.

- Contemplate the resilient people in your life.
- Tell your resilience stories.

Mindfulness:

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” Jon Kabat-Zinn.

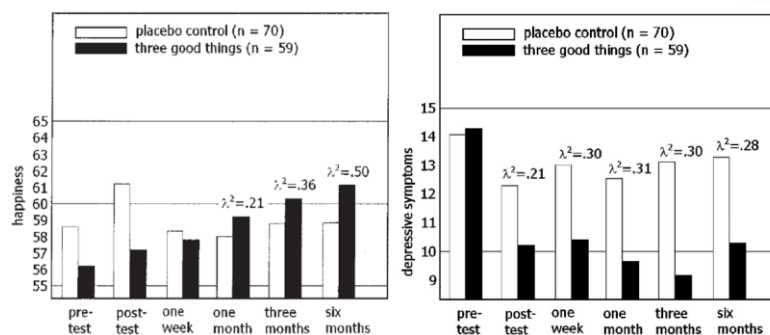
Nurture

- Strong friendships
- An awareness of what gives you passion and meaning
- Maintain physical fitness

Three Good things

- Practice counting three good things that happened during the day

Seligman, Steen, Park & Petersen, 2005



Resources:

1. National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience <https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being>
2. A Resilience Toolkit -Maintaining Resilience Through Challenging Times <http://sundaymorningcafe.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/A-Resilience-Toolkit.pdf>
3. Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive Psychology Progress: Empirical Validation of Interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60(5), 410–421.

And most important of all:

Gratitude and Savor



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Association of American Medical Colleges

I hope we will all learn from these take-home points. Thank you for your time for reading it.

Best Regards,

Krati Chauhan MD, MPH, FACR

Associate Professor, Division of Rheumatology

Co-chair, Mentorship and career advancement, Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science (AWIMS)

Associate Program Director, Internal Medicine Residency, SIU School of Medicine

National Women's Health Week special AWIMS Salon Mother's Day episode

Listen in on a fantastic discussion among Dr. Christine Todd, Dr. Betsy Hopkins, and Dr. Dorcas Adaramola about parenting during the pandemic!

[\(747\) Mother's Day AWIMS Salon - YouTube](#)



4th Annual Women in Medicine and Science Professional Development Conference

AWIMS hosted its 4th annual conference, a virtual meeting of the minds on the theme of advocacy, featuring renowned local and national leaders.

By Dr. Vidhya Prakash

The Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science (AWIMS) hosted its 4th annual Women in Medicine and Science Professional Development Conference on June 17th and 18th. Regional and national leaders, including Dr. Larissa Avilés-Santa, Ms. Kalpana Kotagal (co-author of the *Inclusion Rider*), Dr. Meera Kotagal, Ms. Nikita Richards, and Dr. Alice Thornton, shared their personal advocacy stories and engaged the audience in meaningful and thoughtful dialogue.

Our panel discussion featuring local advocates, Ms. Erica Austin, Ms. Heather Whetsell, Mr. Michael Phelon, Dr. Susan Hingle, and Dr. Tracey Smith, was especially well-received. Hearing about their leadership journeys and how they resiliently overcame obstacles was inspiring.

AWIMS honored Dr. Careyana Brenham and Dr. Myto Duong, recipients of this year's AWIMS award. In addition, Dr. Hilary Sanfey was honored with the AWIMS Founders award.

We held a virtual networking session where participants could share their struggles over the last fifteen months in a safe space, meeting new people in the process.

Five of our RISE WIMS (Research Initiative to Sponsor and Empower Women in Medicine and Science) grant recipients through the AMA's Joan F. Giambalvo award presented their research. The presentations by Dr. Dorcas Adaramola, Dr. Priyanka Bhandari, Dr. Ruchika Goel, Dr. Shruti Hegde, and Dr. Haneme Idrizi, were outstanding and reflective of many months of diligence, collaboration, and exceptional mentorship from our faculty and SIU Center for Clinical Research colleagues.

We are especially grateful to our sponsors who made this conference possible:

Memorial Health System

HSHS St. John's Hospital

SIU Center for Human and Organizational Potential

SIU Department of Family and Community Medicine

SIU Department of Internal Medicine

SIU Department of Medical Education

SIU Neuroscience Institute (Departments of Neurology, Neurosurgery, & Psychiatry)

SIU Department of Pediatrics

SIU Department of Population Science and Policy

Much gratitude to Dean Jerry Kruse for his invaluable support, Ms. Lydia Howes who created another fantastic AWIMS video, Ms. Maria Ansley who edited the conference videos which are now available to the public (see links below), Ms. Lauren Crocks and Ms. Isabella Silveri for their creation of the beautiful program, and to the Office of Continuing Professional Development staff including Ms. Jennifer Coyle, Mr. Ronald Wilshusen, and Ms. Barbara Shelow for their tremendous work in keeping the conference organized and running smoothly. Finally, much gratitude to the conference planning committee (aka "Dream Team") including Dr. Wendi El-Amin, Dr. Heeyoung Han, Dr. Susan Hingle, Dr. Stacy Sattovia, Dr. Vidhya Sundareshan, and Ms. Laura Worrall.

AWIMS 4th Annual Conference Videos

Day 1: <https://youtu.be/qdXlg9q39JE>

Day 2: <https://youtu.be/7pGMzqoWbIA>

AWIMS Video: AWIMS has made me a better ally...

Introducing AWIMS HeForShe Initiative!

Dr. Robert Robinson summarizes this highly impactful AWIMS initiative to bridge the gender equity chasm.

By Dr. Robert Robinson

AWIMS has a new initiative called HeForShe with a mission to recruit men and people of all genders to work in solidarity with women in medicine and science to eliminate the gender equity gap. The AWIMS HeForShe long-term vision is to make the gender equity gap obsolete. With the objective of targeted and informed allyship, the HeForShe working group is gathering data on mentorship, promotion, tenure, research, faculty development, compensation, and sexual harassment to develop an objective understanding of gender equity at SIU-SOM. This SIU-SOM data will be highlighted during an upcoming HeForShe introductory session designed to refine the short and long-term objectives of AWIMS HeForShe.

AWIMS and the HeForShe initiative are housed within the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at SIU-SOM and are open to ALL members of the SIU community. Critical partners for AWIMS within SIU-SOM include cHOP, Human Resources, Medical Education, and many other administrative units and people in the SIU family.

AWIMS Receives Honorable Mention from NIH

AWIMS receives an honorable mention from the NIH Office of Research on Women's Health for the NIH Prize for Enhancing Faculty Gender Diversity in Biomedical and Behavioral Science.

By Dr. Vidhya Prakash

The NIH Office of Research on Women's Health held a competition for the NIH Prize for Enhancing Faculty Gender Diversity. This national competition recognizes institutions that "have acted to effect systemic change in gender diversity and equity among faculty members within their biomedical and behavioral science departments, centers, or divisions."

AWIMS was one of six institutions acknowledged through an honorable mention (see announcement below). This recognition is the result of a tremendous amount of hard work from incredibly committed, dedicated, and passionate AWIMS members and leadership including the AWIMS executive committee and advisory board, and invaluable support from SIU leadership including our dean, Dr. Jerry Kruse, and our associate dean for equity, diversity, and inclusion, Dr. Wendi El-Amin.

The NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) would also like to recognize [see institutions below] as honorable mentions for their commitment to gender diversity.

Intersectional Directions: Faculty Success @XULA, Xavier University of Louisiana

Colorado Trails to Advance Gender Diversity, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Anschutz Medical Campus

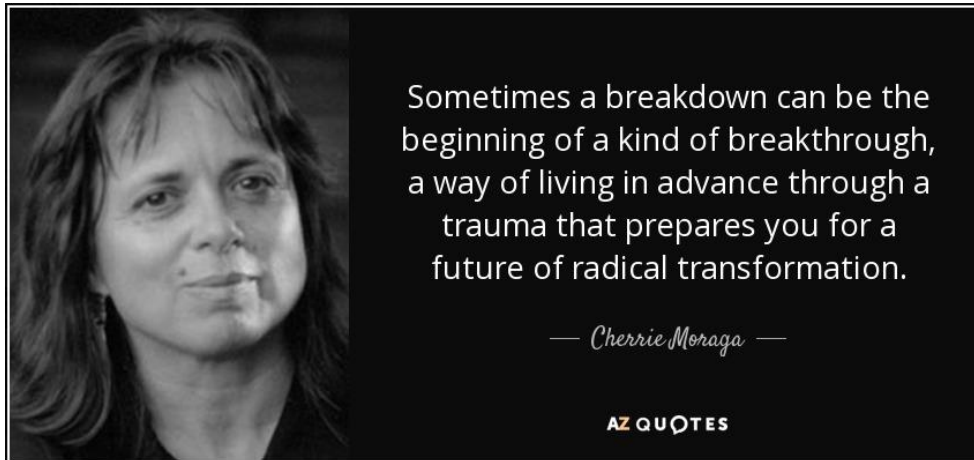
Women in Medicine and Science Program, Office of Faculty Affairs at Wake Forest School of Medicine

University of Chicago: Using 3 R's to Elevate Women, Department of Medicine Women's Committee at the University of Chicago

Promoting Women Scientists during COVID and Beyond, Mass General Brigham, Harvard Medical School

Eye of the Tiger: Women with a Will to Thrive, Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science (AWIMS) at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

Articles and Quotes



[How to Disrupt a System that was Built to Hold You Back](#)

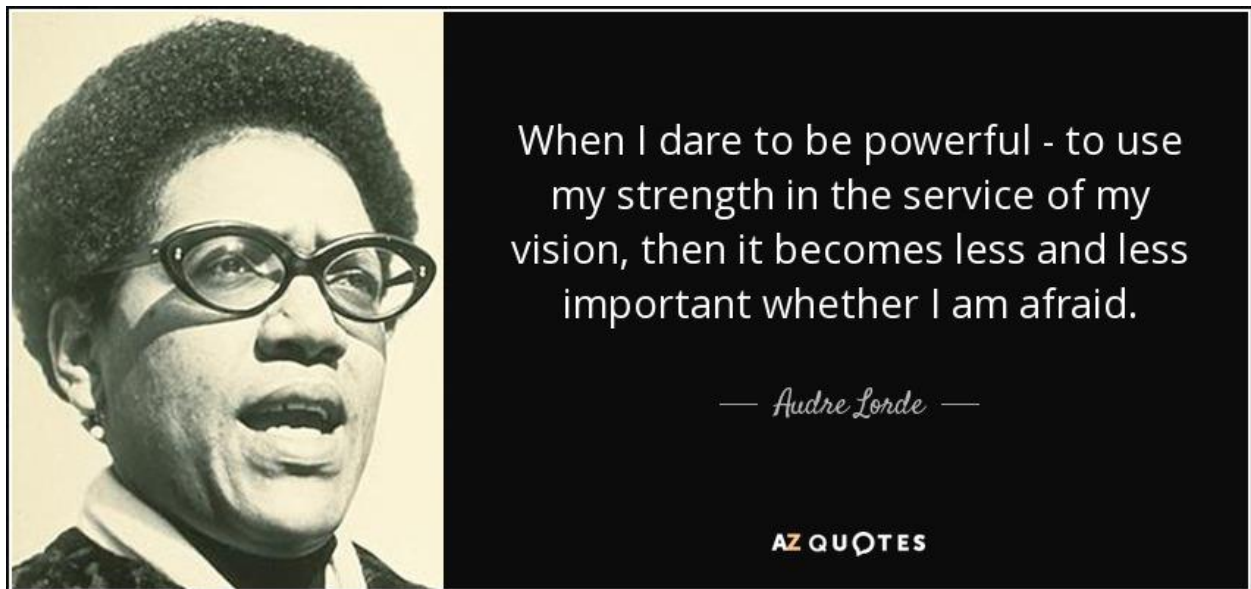
[The Different Words We Use to Describe Male and Female Leaders \(hbr.org\)](#)

[Concrete steps to diversify the scientific workforce | Science \(sciencemag.org\)](#)

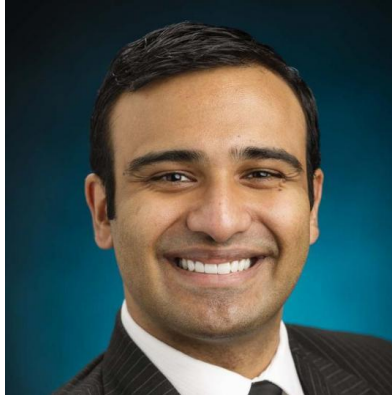
[Levels of Racism: A Theoretic Framework \(state.mn.us\)](#)

[Promoting Equity for Women in Medicine — Seizing a Disruptive Opportunity | NEJM](#)

[Medscape Physician Compensation Report 2021: The Recovery Begins](#)



AWIMS Spotlight: Dr. Shreepada Tripathy



Role at SIU Medicine: Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics / Pediatric Hospitalist Attending

Born and Raised: Born in Jasper, Indiana; Raised in Lubbock, Texas

Birthday: 04/20/1986

Family: Wife – Kelly, Parents – Rasika and Prabasini, Dog – Serena

Favorite Books: *Outliers* – Malcolm Gladwell. *Crime and Punishment* - Fyodor Dostoevsky

Hobbies: Crossfit, Running, Trying new restaurants here in Springfield

Personal Heroes: My parents. I am the son of immigrants who left their life and family in India to create a better life for themselves as well as their children. One of the many things my parents taught me that no matter what I do, I should give it my best effort every single day.

Most Embarrassing Moment: during my first month of pediatrics residency, I was on my Infectious Disease rotation and we were asked to consult on a patient. I went in, took a history, did a physical, came out and handwrote a very long consult note (yes this was in the days of paper charting). 4 pages and an hour later, I was finally done. I went to my attending to present the patient. After I got through my presentation, she looked at the name and room number on the chart and told me that I had done all this work on the wrong patient. I was crushed that I did all of that work essentially for nothing and also embarrassed that I made such a big mistake. When I went back to do

the consult, I double checked the room number, and then did the consult on the right patient.

What is your advice for achieving work-life balance? It is important to surround yourself with people that understand that there will be times when work will dominate your life. When work is not so busy, it is up to you to take time for yourself. It is important to spend time away from work and take care of yourself. The hospital will still be standing when you are not there.

What is the best piece of advice a mentor gave you? One of my mentors in residency once told me to choose a career that makes you happy. Your career is lifelong and there is no point of doing something that you do not enjoy. If you are unhappy or not enjoying what you do, it is ok to change paths and figure out what you enjoy.

What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science? One of the best parts of my job is that I get to mentor residents and medical students about their career paths. Since being here at SIU, I have had the opportunity to mentor brilliant women on not only their careers but also personal issues regarding their families as well as mental health. While they come to me for advice, I learn just as much just by talking to them about their unique viewpoints on these kinds of issues.

AWIMS Spotlight: Ms. Laura Worrall



Role at SIU Medicine: Director, Office of Continuing Professional Development - I started in the office in 1999 and became Director in 2012.

Born and Raised: Charleston, Illinois

Birthday: Halloween

Family: My husband is retired (and anxiously waiting for me to do the same). I have a stepson in Jacksonville, and my stepdaughter and her family live in Columbus, OH. Our grandchildren are about to start 1st and 5th grades. I have a younger brother, who is a Methodist minister in Belleville, IL; 3 nieces and 1 nephew (who happens to be on General Hospital). We also have one really good boy at home – a 140-pound mastiff named Ruger.

Favorite Books: My list of favorites is constantly changing. Right now, my favs are: *Sacred Rest* by Saundra Dalton-Smith, MD; *How to Be a Boss at Ageing* by Anniki Sommerville; *Everything is Figureoutable* by Marie Forleo; *More than Enough* by Elaine Welteroth; and anything by Brené Brown.

Hobbies: I'm an avid walker (every morning at 4:45), and I love to repurpose old things with farmhouse paint. My real passion, though, is piano. I started playing at age 3 and turned professional at 14. Before moving to Springfield in the late '90s, I co-owned a music store & studio with my mother in Charleston where we had over 100 piano students between us.

Personal Hero: My mom. She was my first piano teacher and instilled in me a deep love of music. She has also been my role model for how to balance faith, family and work and do it with grace and a sense of humor.

Most Embarrassing Moment: Too many to even remember! I do recall walking through the mall in Decatur with my mom, who was still wearing her 'teacher clothes' from work that day. The elastic waistband of her mid-calf length half-slip had lost its 'grip'; and, as we walked, she felt it starting to slide down her legs and out the bottom of her skirt. She calmly walked behind a large planter in the center of the mall, carefully stepped out of the fallen slip without missing a beat, and kept on walking. Being in my late teens at the time, I was mortified – sure that everyone in the mall had seen what happened. What I learned, though, was that if you remain calm – at least 'above the surface' – most of the time, no one will even notice the turmoil that's taking place!

What is your advice for achieving work-life balance?

1. Figure out what self-care you need and make it happen. (I call this the 'Flight Attendant Clause' – take care of yourself before you try to help others.)
2. Extend grace to yourself, as well as to those around you.
3. Don't put more pressure on yourself than you would put on those with whom you work or live.
4. ALWAYS have a sense of humor and NEVER take yourself too seriously.

What is the best piece of advice a mentor gave you? One of my earliest piano teachers taught me two important lessons: a) don't fear making mistakes and b) there's no such thing as 'perfect'. It's inevitable that mistakes are going to happen, but that's how you learn and improve. As for perfection, it's a myth...there's ALWAYS room for improvement. It's easier for me to follow these theories in my music world, but I try to apply them in my work world, as well.

What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science? I started working with AWIMS when my office assisted with the first Women in Medicine and Science Professional Development Conference. We just completed the 4th conference, and it has become one of the most popular continuing ed events we offer. Although I'm neither a woman in medicine nor science, I've always learned so much from the AWIMS education events.

AWIMS Spotlight: Dr. Victoria Nichols-Johnson



Role at SIU Medicine: Associate Professor of Ob/Gyn. I was also Ob/Gyn Clerkship Director for several years. For a brief time, I served as Chief of General Ob/Gyn Division

Born and Raised: Springfield, Illinois.

Birthday: November 21 (I don't give the year because age is just a number)

Family: I have 3 children: Marguerita is an independent Nonprofit Revenue Strategist in Pittsburgh and her husband is a chef. Victoria (Vykye) is Family & Community Engagement Coordinator for District 186. She has a daughter at the University of Arizona, Her husband works at Caterpillar in Decatur. George recently ventured into his own business as a web developer in Phoenix. His wife is in education administration. Richard, a stepson, has his own appliance repair business. He has two children and two grandchildren, which means I am a great-grandmother. Because Marguerita and Vykye have blended families, I have lots of grandchildren. My husband, Louis, was a telecommunications specialist for the state of Illinois, and then served as president of the local AFSCME Retiree Chapter for several years. We loved our trips to Europe with the Springfield Choral Society. Unfortunately, he passed away rather quickly of a myelodysplastic disorder four years ago.

Favorite Books: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee; *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*, by Bebe Moore Campbell

Hobbies: Music, exercise, spectator sports especially baseball and college basketball. I am involved a lot in my church, my sorority, and I am volunteer manager for my small church credit union.

Personal Hero: My maternal grandmother - she would have been a political leader had she been born in different times.

Most Embarrassing Moment: I am sure I have many I have suppressed. I do remember being in the middle lane on the Mystic River bridge in 9 am traffic traveling to a residency interview. I had recently purchased a 1969 Mercury Cougar which sat lower to the ground than I realized. I was unable to avoid a crumpled hubcap, and it got caught underneath the car and suddenly I was not going anywhere. How many people were late to work while the nice driver of the 18-wheeler behind me helped remove the offending object?

What is your advice for achieving work-life balance? The first thing is to realize you are going to need help. If you have a family or are planning to have one, make sure you have a spouse who agrees with having a babysitter/housekeeper in the house. Always be interested in something other than your work.

What is the best piece of advice a mentor gave you? Even if you do not plan to leave your job, do not be afraid to let people know that others are seeking you out.

What is your unique contribution to Women in Medicine and Science? There has been a lot of discussion in recent years about physicians not listening to their female patients. Listening is a skill I hope I taught my students. Also, I hope I served as a role model (although I don't like that phrase a lot) so girls and women know that they can venture into any field in which they are interested. In ob/gyn I was always interested in avoiding unnecessary intervention. For instance, I was an early proponent of vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC). I even experienced it myself with my 2nd and 3rd pregnancies. I am a strong advocate for physician education in breastfeeding. I helped found an international organization, the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, of which I am very proud.

AWIMS Advisory Board

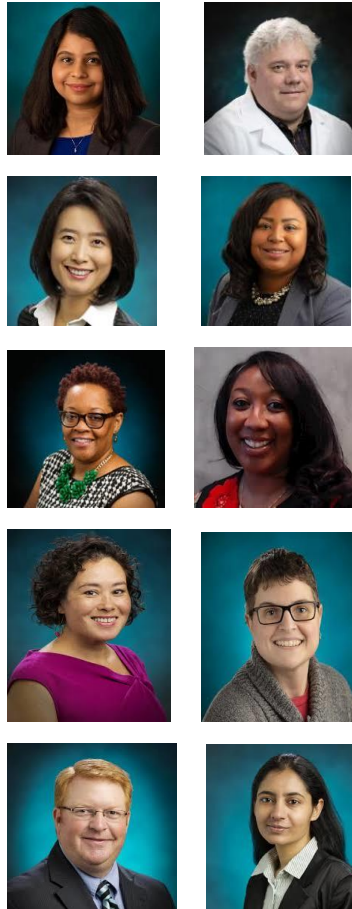


Left to right:
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David Steward
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