

The face of wellness, diversity, equity & inclusion: A national review of obstetrics & gynecology programs

Malik T. Mays, BA¹, Dani G. Zoorob, MD¹, Lena Faisel, MS¹, Danielle Dever, MD¹, Shahnaz Vellani, MS¹, James W. Van Hook, MD¹

1. University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences, Toledo, OH, USA

Abstract

PURPOSE: The objective of this study was to review Obstetrics and Gynecology (Ob/Gyn) residency program websites in the United States based on their published support for the concepts of wellness and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

INTRODUCTION: The pandemic has propelled interviews to become virtual, thus restricting onsite interactions and engagement when identifying alignment of values and personal needs. As such, applicants rely on accessible online references such as websites and other social media platforms to assess for compatibility and ultimately, the selection of residency programs.

Wellness and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) are critical to the success of both residents and programs associated. Studies have been previously devised to assess such concepts; however, limited medical student consultation and input guided such analyses or benchmarking. With the commitment to student values and needs, it is paramount to optimize residency program websites based on such a consensus.

METHODS: This is a cross-sectional analysis of Ob/Gyn residency program websites across the United States between March 15 and April 14, 2022. The website assessment was based on a compilation of 22-attributes devised by two focus groups. The first focus group consisted of 9 medical students that developed the criteria based on research and online commentary. The concentrations included DEI-related semantics, sex /ethnic representation in faculty and residents, and wellness verbiage.

The second focus group piloted and refined the questions. The second group consisted of 40 voluntarily recruited students from the University of Toledo College of Medicine. A cohort of racially and gender diverse researchers (medical students and junior residents) performed the assessment to ensure representative benchmarking.

All researcher and focus group participants were racially, ethnically, and gender diverse to ensure representative benchmarking. Racial diversity in this study was defined as the medical student researcher's self-perceived identification of at least one African-American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander faculty member and resident among their colleagues based on publicly-accessible website photographic representation.

Gender diversity was defined similarly as the medical student researcher's photo-based self-perceived identification of at least one member of a differing gender compared to the majority (a minimum of female and/or one male) within the faculty

members and resident class.

RESULTS: A total of 261 ACGME Ob/Gyn program websites met the threshold of available data and were included in the data analysis (out of 296, 88%). Up to 41% of programs did not display pictures of either faculty or residents. Of those with photographs, diversity from an underrepresented or minority standpoint in faculty and residents was noted in 90% and 83% of programs respectively. Involvement in underserved community support was reported in only 17% of programs.

While faculty and resident gender diversity was noted in 100% and 87% of programs respectively, LGBTQIA allyship and sexual orientation support was referenced in 24% of websites with only 4% displaying inclusive pronouns.

Only 23% of programs had a dedicated DEI section with 29% having such verbiage mentioned in the chairperson or program director commentary. Similarly, only 35% of websites clearly stated mission statements or program goals supporting such a focus with 17% including them in their curricula. Of the 49% of programs listing their research, DEI and wellness was noted in 55% of the websites.

Up to 78% overlooked wellness in the chairperson or program director sections whereas 40% had no wellness support noted throughout the website. Up to 46% of programs had no group wellness activities referenced and only 22% of programs had a dedicated faculty or resident focused on team wellness.

Holistic review for recruitment was stressed in 18% of websites with 21% mentioning microaggression and implicit bias training. However, only 4% of ObGyn websites included dedicated sections supporting the cultural and religious needs of residents.

CONCLUSION: There is a paucity of key wellness and DEI attributes across Ob/Gyn residency websites. Programs should improve their websites to deliver better representation of current offerings to attract a resilient and diverse applicant pool.