Background: There is a paucity of examples for gender discrimination and sexual harassment in radiology. This lack of knowledge among radiologists' ability to relate to this topic, acknowledge its importance and impact, and take actions toward improvement.

Materials and Methods: We conducted a qualitative analysis using the model of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke of narrative responses to a survey on the topic of #MeToo, which was distributed to a social media group of female radiologists.

Results: In all, 575 anonymous survey responses from 3,265 social media group members were analyzed. Among these responses, the study team identified important themes with examples, including Victims and Perpetrators, Acts of Gender Discrimination, Inequalities, Sexual Harassment and Assault, and Microaggressions.

Conclusion: The narratives provide relatable examples of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in radiology. These may spark discussions that raise awareness among radiologists and result in interventions geared toward improvement.

Theme: Victims

Trainees

Q1: I experienced sexual harassment during residency and internship. I was kissed on the lips by an attending and hugged. During residency I experienced heavy flirting.

Q2: I was sexually assaulted by a senior resident. After reporting him, I was ostracized by my colleagues and lost most of my friends. He was promoted to chief resident. I have also experienced sexual harassment and gender discrimination from program directors and attendings.

Q3: I did not report the incident to fellow[s], which involves an attending I worked with directly and closely. The incidents involved inappropriate jokes of a sexual nature and staring at my posterior/buttocks. Honestly I just thought this was just part of the game. We are not trained to not burn bridges, that the radiology community is so small. I did not want to hurt my chances of getting a job in the future so I ignored it. I realize now that I should have said something because if the perpetrator is not stopped they just find new victims.

Theme: Perpetrators

Superiors

Q6: The dean stalked his tongue down my throat when I came back to my prep school for an event after graduating.

Q7: I had an attending who would go drink with the residents, and hit on all the female residents. Once he tried to kiss me, and many times he tried to grab my ass.

Q8: I have also experienced sexual harassment and gender discrimination from program directors and attendings.

Q9: On night call in an elevator to the call room, assaulted physically by senior resident. Reported to department chair. Resident got a verbal reprimand.

Q10: One example is when I asked a supposed mentor about job search when I was in fellowship and looking to stay in the same area for one year, his suggestion was having a kid in that year and staying home.

Theme: Acts of Gender Discrimination

Interviews

Q20: I applied for a job at [ ], and I was told I would never get an interview because the chair thinks women are useless.

Q27: During residency interviews, being that radiology is male-dominated, I felt that most programs didn’t want to hire a female. I wasn’t a “fit” so there was a lot less interaction with me.

…and many more examples:

Theme: Sexual Harassment

Verbal

Q72: When I was in training I actually had one faculty that would ask me how large I thought a patient’s breasts were based on how many bras he saw us on the x-ray and how that compared to my bra and breast size.

Q73: How are your "tit" today? [It] was my morning greeting every day on neurosurgery rotation in internship.

Q74: The residents involved inappropriate jokes of a sexual nature and staring at my posterior/buttocks.

Q75: Comments on my bra size.

Q76: Let me start by saying I take great effort to hide my figure when I’m at work. I always wear a sweater, jacket, white coat, or a loose-fitting top because I am a busty female with a small waist. This is intentional as to not draw attention to this fact. There have been occasions where I have to take off my white coat or sweater—are, to put on a lead or if I am swamped. I was one of those occasions [I] had to remove my white coat and the radiologist [I] looked me up and down and said, “You’re bad at [job]!” [I] responded yes, and then he said, “Will you have an x-ray of mine?” I was checked. [I] looked at the tech standing next to him, who happened to be male, and said, “Oh I just say that so I’m not [brave enough to confront him directly] but I wanted him to know I thought it was inappropriate.”

Theme: Inequalities

Unfair pay

Q50: In a former practice, the female staff radiologists were paid at least 50% less than the male staff radiologists.

Q49: There was a salary discrepancy between me and male colleagues [that] was based on the same time at the same rank. Over several years, (this) deficit of salary was hefty.

Q51: I was paid less than my male colleague [that] was paid the same level of experience, even though I had additional administrative responsibilities [that] he did not have.

Q52: My administrative duties were taken away and my salary was cut disproportionately more than my male colleagues during the time of cutting back and “restructuring.”

...and many more examples:

You Too?
Female Radiologists’ Narratives on Discrimination and Harassment

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