Linda Brodsky Memorial Journal

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Being interested in sports medicine, I believe it is important to exemplify healthy work life balance. Similar to the saying, “practice what you preach”, I believe it is vital to maintain physical and mental health working in sports medicine, as well as all realms of healthcare not only for ourselves, but also for our patients. If we, as providers, set healthy examples for our respective patient populations, this can lead to a positive influence and impact for generations to come, in terms of overall health and well-being.

However, this is clearly easier said than done. As medicine continues to progress, so does the demand on students and residents, with a correlated increase in competition and difficulty to thrive in such environments. Part of the difficulty to thrive is the lack of work-life balance that is brought on by extensive hours residency entails as well as the increasing demand to excel in all areas within medicine. But at what point does this need to excel in our careers outweigh the need to excel in our personal health? What physicians would we be if we did not maintain our own health while treating others and helping maintain theirs?

The emphasis on succeeding throughout school and residency is inevitably what leads to successful people becoming “prisoners of their careers”. Something they once loved and had increasing passion for, took over their every thought and entire life. Leading to a decrease in physical fitness, sleep, and mental health. If we, as a society, especially women in medicine for their fellow women in medicine, can continue to emphasize and display the crucial need for maintaining our health both physically and mentally, we can help change the underlying tone of people becoming prisoners of their careers. Doing this takes tremendous discipline, however, so does becoming a physician. If our female providers have displayed the discipline to get to where they are now, they have the discipline to put their health as a priority while excelling in their field. The key here is to set the tone and message that this is, in fact, okay to do. It is easy to get caught up by putting every ounce of their day into their careers when their peers are doing it, this leads to a wide scale effect of decline in happiness for themselves and their peers. But burn-out is real, and we see it increase every year within physicians. Setting the tone of positivity, discipline and acceptance of putting our health as a priority will help young female providers continue to stay passionate and driven without becoming prisoners of their career.

As a woman in healthcare, specifically as a female medical student with high interests in orthopedic surgery and sports medicine, it is extremely prevalent that this is a male dominated area within medicine. Whether this is due to conflicting interests amongst genders, cultural norms, or other workplace ordeals, one thing is abundantly clear: this may be a much more competitive specialty to apply to as a female vs a male. Being that this is already an extremely competitive specialty, this additional fact adds a daunting undertone and may sway some excellent students toward another route. How do we fix this? I believe in recognizing each physician as who they are and what kind of physician they are, regardless of gender is a crucial part of advancing this gender gap in areas such as these. Why is it so often brough up in conversation? “oh, that is a male dominated field”, why is this brought to the forefront of our minds and conversations? Like many other careers, this is likely to develop and change over time. Females have been making strides in medicine for decades and will continue to do so, as long as this keeps happening, the likelihood of “male dominated fields” will decrease.

The meaning of work life integration can, and will (rightfully so) differ for everyone, it will differ amongst female physicians. I believe that recognizing this alone can help decrease stigma or different attitudes amongst some people toward others about what WLI means to them. Everyone comes from differing backgrounds, they hold differing beliefs and morals, and everyone is entitled to take all of this into consideration when it comes to their careers.

Personally, work life integration means pursuing a career I am incredibly passionate about, while maintaining relationships with my loved ones and doing my best to stay healthy both physically and mentally. Fitness has always been a large part of my life, and a large part of what keeps me grounded and mentally healthy. I plan to continue to prioritize fitness throughout my schooling and career, as it may seem like it’s taking time away from whatever task is at hand that day, I remind myself that it increases my overall efficiency, effectiveness and wellbeing, and therefore is worth taking the time to do. As we continue to navigate the challenges of this demanding profession, we must remember that taking care of ourselves is not a luxury, but a necessity for sustainable success. Through discipline, support, and recognition of our unique needs, we can create a healthier, more balanced future for ourselves and for the patients we serve.

**Biography**



I am a first-year, first-generation medical student with a passion for integrating physical activity into daily healthcare. My goal is to promote preventive measures and raise awareness about the benefits of sports medicine for all individuals. I am particularly committed to advancing gender equality within healthcare and empowering women to pursue their aspirations, regardless of their circumstances. I earned a B.S. in Exercise Physiology from Florida State University and spent several gap years working as a medical assistant in primary care and orthopedic surgery. Outside of academics, I enjoy weightlifting, running, snowboarding, and reading. My mission is to bridge the gap between fitness and healthcare, ensuring that physical well-being becomes an accessible and prioritized aspect of overall health.