



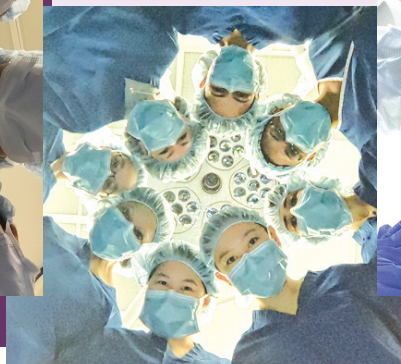
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# The XX Factor

At a very basic level, what sets men and women apart is their sex chromosomes. As you surely recall from your early school days, men have X and Y chromosomes, and women have a pair of X chromosomes. The differences between the genders continue from there, affecting brain size, pain threshold, the ability to build muscle and store fat, and more. All differences aside, when it comes to performing most tasks and skills, the playing field is actually quite level—at face value, anyway. Although mainstream society no longer regards women as “the weaker sex,” women are not immune from gender discrimination. In fact, many believe that we still have a way to go before everyone recognizes and accepts that women are as competent and skilled as men in the professional world.

Around this time last year, the cover of *The New Yorker*’s health issue was an illustration offering a patient’s-eye view of a group of female surgeons looking down at an operating table. This cover sparked a movement to raise awareness about women in medicine when hundreds of female surgeons around the world created their own versions of the cover and shared them online with the hashtag #ILookLikeASurgeon. (The hashtag itself was born from an earlier iteration, #ILookLikeAnEngineer, created to spread awareness about the need for diversity in the technology industry.) Women in the retina world, naturally, also got in on the action, and some of your colleagues were kind enough to share their photos with us for this issue (see top of page).

Competent, innovative surgeons come in all genders, races, sizes, and religions. Ignore this, and you may miss out—on life-long friendships, valuable mentorships, collaborative opportunities—who knows what. On the following pages of this issue of *Retina Today*, our cover series acknowledges the challenges and celebrates the achievements of the growing number of female retina surgeons who are forging their own paths in a traditionally male-dominated profession. We think you’re pretty special. Keep doing what you’re doing; your efforts will inspire future generations.

— Karen Roman, Editor-in-Chief

## (TOP OF PAGE) #ILOOGLIKEASURGEON: WHO’S WHO

From Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami, Miami, Florida (clockwise from top left): Ashley Crane, MD; Marianeli Rodriguez, MD; Kimberly Tran, MD; Sarah Read, MD; and Audina M. Berrocal, MD

From Duke Eye Center, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina (clockwise from top center): Avni Finn, MD, MBA; Cynthia A. Toth, MD; Xi Chen, MD, PhD; Lejla Vajzovic, MD; Wenlan (Wendy) Zhang, MD; and Sharon Fekrat, MD, FACS

From New England Eye Center, Tufts University School of Medicine, Boston, Massachusetts (clockwise from top left): Natalie Erlich-Malona, MD; Lauren Bierman, MD; Shilpa Desai, MD; Xuejing Chen, MD; and Caroline R. Bauman, MD

From Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore Maryland (clockwise from top center): Mira Sachdeva, MD, PhD; Sharon Solomon, MD; Roomasa Channa, MD; Cindy Cai, MD; Julia Sein, MD; Adrienne Scott, MD; Kim Jiramongkolchai, MD; and Ingrid Zimmer-Galler, MD

From Vanderbilt Eye Institute, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, Tennessee (clockwise from top center): Joy Carroll, MD; Jessica Burris; Janice Law, MD; and Laura Snyder, MD