

# Gender Perceptions in Health Technology: Survey Highlights

**Purpose:** To better understand gender diversity in the health technology industry, which includes medical device, device-based diagnostic, digital health, and health information technology companies, [The Stanford Byers Center for Biodesign](#) and the [Fogarty Institute for Innovation](#) developed a survey to explore leadership representation and perceptions of equality, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. The survey was distributed in early 2019 to health technology professionals with an emphasis on reaching individuals in small and mid-sized companies. The findings were compiled, analyzed, and submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal. In February 2020, the *Annals of Biomedical Engineering* published the article, the full text of which is available on the [Diversity by Doing \(DxD\) webpage](#), along with other gender diversity resources.

**Who answered:** 403 respondents, 38% male, 62% female.

## Findings:

- **Women are significantly underrepresented in senior leadership:** 60% of respondents work in organizations where women make up one quarter or less of senior leadership teams (director and above). Only 10% work in companies where females make up half or more-than-half of the senior leadership team. Most of these female-led companies are small, with 10 or fewer employees.
- **Men and women experience the workplace differently:**
  - 88% of male respondents said they fit in and are part of the team at work compared to 71% of female respondents\*
  - 94% of male respondents say they speak freely at meetings and their professional contributions are heard and valued compared to 73% of female respondents\*
  - 84% of male respondents say promotion criteria are equitable compared to 35% of female respondents\*
  - 55% of male respondents say senior leaders are focused on recruiting and promoting women compared to 31% of female respondents\*
  - 80% of male respondents say the workplace empowers women to reach their full potential compared to 36% of female respondents\*
- **Perhaps because of above findings, more than one-third of women are thinking about changing jobs:** 34% of female respondents were considering leaving their jobs compared to 16% of male respondents.\* When asked why, the top two reasons listed by females were dissatisfaction with management (45%) and a desire for greater advancement opportunities (42%).
- **Mentorship matters:** Women and men with mentors scored significantly higher on proxy statements for job satisfaction than respondents without mentors. In addition, women with mentors also scored significantly higher than women without mentors on proxy statements that reflect an inclusive environment at work.
- **What holds women back from senior leadership? Men and women disagree.** 62% of male respondents said the major barrier that holds women back is the desire to balance work and family responsibilities, compared to 46% of female respondents.\* 70% of women said the biggest barrier was exclusion from networks of communication and influence, compared to 43% of male respondents.\* However, both genders chose stereotyping and bias as the second largest barrier (57% of female respondents and 51% of male respondents).
- **Bias persists in fundraising and it isn't obvious to the men:** 247 respondents had been involved in fundraising. 47% of women respondents said that male and female members of the pitch team were treated differently. Only 10% of men agreed.\*

\* differences are statistically significant

**Questions?** Contact Stacey McCutcheon at [staceypm@stanford.edu](mailto:staceypm@stanford.edu) or see [bit.ly/DxDHealthtech](https://bit.ly/DxDHealthtech)