Background: The Gender Issue:
The gender balance in primary care has significantly changed in recent years, with females comprising over half of current general practitioners (HSCIC, 2014). Some literature suggests male medical students feel general practice is tailored towards women and is not a ‘masculine’ speciality (Avgerinos et al, 2006). This study sought to understand why this might be the case and whether it can be addressed.

AIMS:
• Explore whether students view general practice in gendered stereotypes.
• Explore what influences medical students in intended career choices and understand why more females are attracted to General Practice.

STUDY DESIGN:
Exploratory research design, using survey and qualitative methods.

METHODS
• Two focus groups were conducted.
• 14 participants were recruited via Bristol Online Survey.
• These included 3 Males and 11 Females, who were either intercalating or in their third or fourth year of study.
• Data was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.
• Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

Findings

“I just think General Practice provides a better lifestyle, I want to ‘choose life’ because I want more out of life. GP life is flexible and accommodating around having a family, kids but I don’t really think men want that.” (Focus Group 1).

“I actually enjoyed my primary care placement this year because I was given more responsibility and was able to consult with patients independently, it’s definitely made me more open to a career in general practice than previous years” (Focus Group 1).

“A General Practitioner: “Jack of all Trades, Master of None”

“Work-life balance”

“Medical Students’ Perceptions of General Practice as a career choice”

“A Pink Profession?”

“I actually enjoyed my primary care placement this year because I was given more responsibility and was able to consult with patients independently, it’s definitely made me more open to a career in general practice than previous years” (Focus Group 1).

“More money in GP will attract more men. Men want more money and prestige than women, but have to as well because of gender roles. General practice is a low-earning, low status career which lacks a sense of achievement for men” (Focus Group 2).

“IT’S NOT JUST FOR GIRLS: WHY ARE MORE FEMALE MEDICAL STUDENTS SPECIALISING IN GENERAL PRACTICE THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS?
A qualitative study exploring attitudes of medical students towards general practice

Authors: Atia Khan, Dr Vicky Ward
AUPC

CONCLUSION:
• There is strong evidence that there is a gendered perception of general practice amongst medical students
• Existing social perspectives and negative stereotypes can deter men from opting for general practice, an issue that needs to be addressed appropriately.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
• Information around career options within general practice such as academic primary care, leadership opportunities in CCG’s and the entrepreneurial side of being a GP partner need to be included in the current medical curricula to better inform medical students.
• Work needs to be conducted in breaking down gender stereotypes. In particular, male medical students have expressed a desire to have clinical attachments with more inspiring male GPs to give a more balanced view of general practice.

REFERENCES: