

## Abstract

**Background:** The gender gap index of Japanese society is one of the lowest in the developed countries. Gender gap is outstanding among physicians. Only 22% of Japanese physicians are women, and 10% of emergency room (ER) physicians are women. As more female ER physicians are needed to meet the demand for emergency medicine, recruitment of female ER physicians is mandatory. The aim of this study is to identify disruptions for career development of female ER physicians and make proposals to increase the number of female ER physicians.

**Methods:** A literature review was conducted on the combination of career-related terms and women, female physicians, and emergency physicians. Then a hypothesis of the career disruptions for female ER physicians was formulated. Based on the hypothesis, stakeholder mapping and a focus group interview was conducted.

**Results:** Women's career disruptions can be divided into external and internal factors. External factors include the availability of support systems, the attitude of the colleagues and a boss, and lack of role models. As for internal factors, it was pointed out that women have difficulty in gaining self-confidence for the achievement comparing to men. It was noted that unconscious gender bias exists both internally and externally among women, affecting their career development. The result of literature review was confirmed by the focus group interview.

**Conclusion:** To increase the number of female ER physicians, it is essential to improve the work-life balance of emergency physicians as a whole and to support the career development of the child-rearing generation.

**Keywords:** Career development, Career ladder, Career mobility, Burnout, Qualitative study, Literature review, Group interview