



Breaking barriers; developing drivers for female surgeons survey

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the purpose of the survey?

This survey is part of a research project that aims to identify female medical students and junior doctors' perceptions and experiences of a career in surgery in Australia and New Zealand.

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is striving to understand and address circumstances that females face so we can break the barriers and develop and enhance the drivers.

What are barriers and drivers?

Negative perceptions and experiences are defined as **barriers** (obstacles, pain points) to a surgical career. Positive perceptions and experiences are defined as **drivers** (support, motivators).

Why is this study important?

Previous [research](#) shows that females represent around 55% of students in medical school but only approximately 30% of surgical training applicants in Australia and New Zealand. RACS has identified gender equity as a priority and this study will help us to achieve this goal.

The study builds on RACS' key initiatives to promote respect, increase diversity and support equal opportunity:

- [RACS' Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety](#) action plan commenced in 2015 to address bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment. This led to the [Operating With Respect](#) course (OWR), a mandatory education module for surgical Fellows, Trainees and International Medical Graduates who work in Australia. Currently 97% of approximately 8,000 people have completed this training with the remaining due to complete it in 2019.
- [Our 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#) highlights promoting women's representation on training selection panels, advocating flexible training and improving mentoring opportunities.
- In 2017/2018, we commissioned a pilot qualitative study where 45 women were interviewed to identify drivers and barriers for women considering a surgical career.



Who can participate in the survey?

If you are female, over 18, in an Australian or New Zealand medical school (university), or a junior doctor (not currently in a surgical training program), this study is for you. If you have not considered a career in surgery, we would like to hear from you too. Participation is voluntary.

What is covered in the survey?

The survey has four sections:

1. Introduction
2. Drivers and barriers for females in selected medical professions
3. Personal drivers and barriers about surgery:
 - a. at university
 - b. in your lifestyle/ choices
 - c. in your perception about the profession
 - d. regarding Surgical Education Training (SET)
4. Demographics

What happens to my data?

Data will be collected by RACS and securely stored for evaluation, quality assurance and research. Participation is voluntary. The findings will be confidentially collated and ethically reported in accordance with our [privacy policy](#). Personal identifying details such as a person's name, address and contact details will not be collected. Any personal identifying information (e.g. disclosed by a participant) will be omitted from reports. Inquiries or complaints about personal information handling may be directed to the Privacy Officer: ph: +61 3 9249 1200 or email college.privacy@surgeons.org.

How long does the survey take to complete?

The survey will take around 10 minutes to complete.

Questions?

For further information, please email surveys@surgeons.org.

How can I help?

Please share the *Breaking barriers; developing drivers for female surgeons* [survey webpage](#) to promote this survey.