Joan F. Giambalvo Fund for the Advancement of Women

About the Giambalvo Fund

The Joan F. Giambalvo Fund for the Advancement of Women provides scholarships of up to $10,000 to support research advancing the study of women in the medical profession and strengthening the AMA’s ability to identify and address the issues affecting women physicians and medical students.

The first award was granted in 2006. The scholarship was established by the Women Physicians Section (WPS) in conjunction with the AMA Foundation. To date, 33 research awards have been granted.

2022 Giambalvo Fund recipients

Learn about the recipients of the 2022 Joan F. Giambalvo Fund for the Advancement of Women and read about their research projects.

Project 1: Unpacking the stranger: Xenophobic Experiences of Arab Women in Academic Medicine

URL: https://www.ama-assn.org/about/awards/joan-f-giambalvo-fund-advancement-women

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Project summary

Xenophobia is the fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners, whereas racism has a broader meaning, including a belief that racial differences produce the inherent superiority of a particular race. While similar, they are important differences and implications of xenophobia on new immigrants, particularly for those from Arab countries impacted by policies such as the "Muslim Ban." IMGs constitute 25% of the U.S. physician workforce, practicing in the much needed primary care fields (38%) such as internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics and psychiatry. Arabs are often categorized under “white” or “African American” or “other” on race questionnaires, there is no documentation of their personal experiences and challenges in the U.S., in particular experiences of women in academic medicine.

This qualitative phenomenological interpretive research study aims to explore the experiences of first-generation immigrant female Arab physicians about challenges that they have faced in the U.S. academic medical system, through in-depth interviews. The results will identify problems faced by the “unseen” category of Arab women in academic medicine and at a national level will aid program-directors and faculty affairs leadership to develop scaffolding support across the continuum.

In current times with increasing nationalism, it is particularly important for academic medicine to highlight the impact of xenophobia on women and bring this to the attention of mainstream diversity, equity and inclusion forums.

“We are deeply honored and grateful by this recognition and support from the AMA. We hope to utilize this grant to build a body of research around social justice issues impacting minoritized women in academic medicine.”

Project 2: Evaluating Communication Strategies as relevant to Surgical Trainees

URL: https://www.ama-assn.org/about/awards/joan-f-giambalvo-fund-advancement-women
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Pictured: Cierra N. Harper, BS (l); Kavitha Ranganathan, MD (middle); Timothy R. Smith, MD, PhD, MPH (r)

Award winners

- **Kavitha Ranganathan, MD**, director, assistant professor, Brigham and Women’s Hospital
- **Timothy R. Smith, MD, PhD, MPH**, associate professor, Department of Neurosurgery, Brigham & Women’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School
- **Cierra N. Harper, BS**, medical student research assistant, Department of Surgery, Division of Neurosurgery, Howard University Hospital

Project summary

While diversification of our workforce has become a top priority of many institutions in health care, the inclusion and subsequent matriculation of these populations into the traditional workplace environment has been less data driven. Addressing disparities in the daily environment of trainees is an important aspect of inclusion that would benefit from scientific evidence. While current literature demonstrates that mistreatment in medicine occurs at all levels of training, we have yet to use objective measures when determining the impact interpersonal communications can have on physician wellness and education.

Furthermore, sufficient focus has not been given to one of the most vulnerable transition points in one’s medical career—intern year. In this study, we will determine the prevalence of challenging interpersonal communication between surgical residents and non-physician providers stratified by demographic factors and across time.

“We are deeply grateful and honored to receive the 2022 Joan F. Giambalvo Fund for the Advancement of Women. The impact of interpersonal communications on physician well-being, particularly across differing demographic populations, is an important issue that affects all specialties and institutions. We are extremely thankful for the support of the AMA in affording us the opportunity to pursue research on this topic.”

Past recipients

Learn about the past recipients of the Joan F. Giambalvo Fund for the Advancement of Women.
Donate to the Giambalvo Fund

The American Medical Association Women Physicians Section (WPS) in conjunction with the AMA Foundation established the Joan F. Giambalvo Fund for the Advancement of Women to promote the progress of women in the medical profession and to strengthen the ability to identify and address the needs of women physicians and medical students.

About Joan F. Giambalvo, MD

Joan Fara Giambalvo received her undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania and, in 1956, her medical degree from Temple University Medical School. Dr. Giambalvo was an intern at Temple University Hospital and certified in her residency by the American Board of Anesthesiology.

Dr. Giambalvo passed away on May 14, 1971, at age 39, of liposarcoma.