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Press release

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**Medical Women's Federation response to BMJ Careers articles:
7th Jan 2012 "Medicine – a woman's world" and "Registrars
don't get pregnant"**

The Medical Women's Federation would like to respond to the two articles on women doctors in this week's BMJ. The first article notes acceptance rates of women in medical schools of 56% in 2010 but comments from senior women doctors highlight a problem with career progression through the medical hierarchy. The second article is a plea from two female registrars about physical adjustments to their role during pregnancy.

The child rearing years of doctors coincide with 5-12yrs postgraduate training typically from age 24 for most graduates. To achieve senior roles in medicine women need to get through core and specialty training and at the same time fulfil family duties.

The Medical Women's Federation encourages and supports women to take up leadership roles and provides expertise amongst members together with resources on their website
www.medicalwomensfederation.org.uk open to all doctors.

It is important for the Health Departments, hospital trusts and postgraduate deaneries to realise that female trainees will get pregnant during their training and may need work adjustments accordingly.

This might have impact on the medical team with relation to pregnancy leave, etc but it must be borne in mind that these doctors are entitled to good medical care just like the patients they treat.

The Medical Women's Federation seeks to ensure

1. No discrimination towards pregnant doctors and a fair standard of working conditions.
2. Increased information and awareness of the NHS terms and conditions for pregnant doctors.
3. Postgraduate Deaneries to allow for better access to Less Than Full Time Training (LTFT) opportunities and interdeanery transfers for those in specialties where there is no easy "slot-share", for example for someone returning to work after maternity leave.

The need for the above is crucial to allow medical students and junior doctors to see that it is possible to combine motherhood with their chosen career training path, whatever that might be, including surgery.

Notes for editors:

- The medical course is 5 – 6 years long, with many doctors qualifying at age 24. "Mature students" are older than this when they qualify.
- Postgraduate training takes 5 – 12 years, depending on the specialty
- The Medical Women's Federation was founded in 1917 and is the largest organisation representing women doctors in the UK.
- There are great resources on websites:
www.medicalwomensfederation.org.uk/maternity and
<http://surgicalcareers.rcseng.ac.uk/wins/guidance/pregnancy-and-maternity> and <http://surgicalcareers.rcseng.ac.uk/wins/guidance>
- The original articles are available at: Registrars don't get pregnant
<http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=20006122> AND Medicine – a woman's world
<http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=20006082>