

### **Professional Obstacles: A Perception-Based Survey of Women Members of AO Trauma Latin America**

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**Purpose:** Orthopaedic surgery remains one of the most homogenous fields in medicine, with men accounting for over 95% of all orthopaedic surgeons worldwide. Regardless of age, experience, or academic achievement, women orthopaedists have historically been underrepresented in leadership positions, academic medicine, and specialty societies and associations. While these trends are recognized globally, limited studies examine these gender-based dynamics in Latin America. This perception-based survey aims to bring awareness to the experiences and challenges of women members of AO Trauma Latin America.

**Methods:** A survey was designed in collaboration with AO Trauma Latin America (AO T Lat) and several national Latin American (LA) orthopaedic societies. Upon consenting in a pre-survey disseminated to identified women orthopaedic surgeons, respondents received the formal perception-based evaluation. The survey was divided into sections: demographics, motivations and opportunities, challenges and barriers, and AO faculty- specific questions utilizing a 5-point Likert scale to rank items between 1 “strongly agree” and 5 “strongly disagree”.

**Results:** 398 individuals who consented to survey participation were sent a formal survey evaluation. Of these, 233 responded, of whom 116 were current or former AO T Lat members from 15 LA countries. Intellectual stimulation and personal gratification and desire to work “hands on” were the 2 strongest motivators for specializing in orthopaedics (91%). A greater percentage of respondents (41%) disagreed than agreed (34%) with statements that their specialization in orthopaedics provided financial security and work/life balance. Most respondents agreed with statements that they felt supported, included, and equal as women in AO Trauma, although there was a wide distribution of scores pertaining to these perceptions.

**Conclusion:** Perspectives expressed by women members of Latin America’s largest international orthopaedic trauma surgeon organization, AO T Lat, provides insight into their views on the support they receive and biases that they face. Understanding these perspectives will assist in developing strategies to continue to diversify the field of orthopaedic trauma, particularly in Latin America and other regions globally.