During early 1970’s, U.S and Western World had witnessed lowest percentage of women dentists in the Western World. In the early 1970’s, roughly half of the dentists in Greece were women, about one-third in France, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and almost four-fifths in Russia, Finland, Latvia, and Lithuania. 

The dental school classes are now approaching 50% males and 50% females. 

What precipitated this gender shift?

Four reasons led to this gender shift:

• The women’s liberation and civil rights movements of the 1960’s and early 1970’s with the attendant shifts in attitudes on women’s’ roles.

• The passage of Title IX in 1972, which outlawed discrimination in education.

• Federal legislation to fund grants and encourage increasing enrollments of women in professional health schools.

• The impact birth control had on opening the doors for a women to a professional career. With birth control most women could choose when to have children.

“Both of these developments were radical and changed a century of prejudice in the U.S. against women as doctors. Birth control stands as one of the greatest biological and cultural changes in history.”

All of these developments were radical and changed a century of prejudice in the U.S. against women as doctors. Birth control stands as one of the greatest biological and cultural changes in history.
The percentage distribution of all active private practitioners and new active private practitioners in the United States by gender, 2003 (2008)

All active private practitioners:
- Male 82.8% (78.6%), Female 17.2% (21.4%)

New active private practitioners:
- Male 65.4% (62.7%), Female 34.6% (37.3%)

Percentage distribution of all professionally active dentists in the United States, Age by gender

Among male professionally active dentists, more than two-thirds - 68.2% - (70.6%) were 45 or older. Among female professionally active dentists, almost exactly two-thirds - 66.6% - (61.6%) were under the age of 45.

Dentists:
- 65 and older, Male 11.9% (14.9%), and Female 1.1% (1.4%)
- 55-64, Male 23.7% (28.6%), Female 4.9% (9.6%)
- 45-54, Male 32.6% (27.7%), Female 27.3% (28.9%)
- 35-44, Male 20.8% (18.9%), Female 39% (35.6%)
- Under 35, Male 11% (9.9%), Female 27.6% (24.5%)

Full and part-time status of all active private practitioners, gender by region and state:
- U.S. Full time Male, 87.1% (88.1%), Part-time 12.9% (11.9%)
- U.S. Full time Female 76.5% (80.4%), Part-time 23.5% (19.6%)

In 2003 (2008), the largest percentage of male active participants was found in the Mountain region where 89.5% (86.6%) (of all active private practitioners were male. Utah had the largest percentage of male active private practitioners in any state 97.7% (97.8%). The largest percentage of female active private practitioners was found in the Pacific region, where 20.3% (23.9%) of all active private practitioners were female.

The District of Columbia and Maryland had the highest percentage of female active private practitioners in any state, 24.2% (27.2%) and 22.8% (25.8%) respectively. The other regions ranged from 86.0% male, 14% female in the West North Central to 82% male to 18% female in the Middle Atlantic. the other regions fell within these ranges.(no statistics available for 2008)

Percentage distribution of practice, research, or administration area for professionally active dentists in the U.S. by gender, 2003 (2008).

All professionally active dentists:

General practitioner,
- Male, 78.6% (78.4%), Female, 81.4% (80.8%)

Specialist,
- Male, 21.4% (21.6%), Female, 18.6% (19.2%)
- New professionally active dentists

General practitioners,
- Male 80.5% (80.7%), Female, 83.0% (82.2%)
- Specialist, Male, 19.5% (19.3%), female, 17.0% (17.8%)
Among all professionally active specialists listed above, the male/female ratios were:

- Orthodontics, Male 5.9% (5.9%), **Female, 4.6% (4.6%)**
- Oral Surgery, Male 4.5% (4.3%), **Female 1.0% (1.0%)**
- Periodontics, Male 3.0% (2.8%), **Female 2.6% (2.3%)**
- Pediatric Dentistry, Male, 2.3% (2.4%), **Female 5.2% (5.4%)**
- Endodontics, Male 2.6% (2.7%), **Female 1.9% (2.1%)**
- Prosthodontics, Male, 2.1% (1.7%), 1.3% (1.1%)
- Public Health, Male, 0.6% (0.2%), **Female, 1.2% (0.6%)**
- Oral Pathology, Male 0.2% (0.1%), **Female, 0.2% (0.1%)**
- Oral Radiology, Male, 0.1% (0.0%), **Female 0.0% (0.0%)**

The male/female ratios for new professionally active specialists closely paralleled the percentages listed for all professionally active specialists.

The following statistics are from the ADA survey center, Survey of Dental Education.

Total Dental school Enrollment by gender, 1995-96 to 2004-05 (2008-2009). Total enrollment increased during this time from 16,552 to 18,315 (19,702). An increase of 10.7% (8.4%). During the same period, the number of female students increased by 32.0% (44.9%). The male enrollment decreased by 1.7% (2.5%) during this time.

Enrollment by gender:

- 1995-96, Male 63.3%, **Female 36.7%**
- 1996-97, Male 63.0%, **Female 37.0%**
- 1997-98, Male 62.6%, **Female 37.4%**
- 1998-99, Male 63.2%, **Female 36.8%**
- 1999-2000, Male 62.2%, **Female 37.8%**
- 2000-01, Male 61.7%, **Female 38.3%**
- 2001-02, Male 59.8%, **Female 40.2%**
- 2002-03, Male 58.0%, **Female 42.0%**
- 2003-04, Male 56.7%, **Female 43.3%**
- 2004-05, Male 56.2%, **Female 43.8%**
- 2005-06, Male 55.7%, **Female 44.3%**
- 2006-07, Male 55.7%, **Female 44.3%**
- 2007-08, Male 55.4%, **Female 44.6%**
- 2008-09, Male 55.1%, **Female 44.9%**

Applications received by dental schools by gender for 2004-05 (2008-2009): United States - Male 57.7% (57.0%), Female 42.3% (44.9%). Canada - Male 46.3%, Female 53.7%. (no statistics were available for Canada in 2008-09.)
The number of women elected as presidents of state dental societies:

- 1998 2 out of 50
- 1999 4 out of 50
- 2000 3 out of 50
- 2001 3 out of 50
- 2002 6 out of 50
- 2003 7 out of 50
- 2004 3 out of 50
- 2005 4 out of 50
- 2006 8 out of 50
- (no statistics available for 2007 to 2009)

Total for this period 40 out of 450 or 8% of total presidencies available were women. The incoming President of the ADA for 2007 is a woman - Kathleen Roth, DDS.

Some statistics from the University of Missouri at Kansas City School of Dentistry published in “Perspectives, the news magazine of UMKC”, Fall edition, 2006, “The Gender Shift”:

School of Dentistry:

- 1946, Male 299 (99.9%, Female 3 (0.0099%)
- 1975, Male 675 (84.5%), Female 124 (15.5%)*
- 2005, Male 242 (62.4%), Female 146 (37.6%)

Some statistics from the University of Missouri at Kansas City for 2005

Undergraduate:
- Male 42%, Female 58%

Graduate:
- Male 40%, Female 60%

Professional schools:
- Male, 51%, Female 49%

Faculty:
- Male, 64%, Female 36%

The UMKC statistics mirror the gender shift nationally. Beginning in the late 1980’s women outnumbered men in colleges and universities. Now in 2010 women have surpassed men in attaining higher degrees.

The University of Missouri at Kansas City statistics show that the number of women in undergraduate programs is increasing and women are in the majority in many undergraduate programs. And, the UMKC statistics show that the number of women in other professional programs is currently 50/50 or more. It is logical to assume that the male/female ratio in dental schools will eventually approach 50/50.

CONCLUSIONS:

Demographics are self-explanatory and more informative.

It is obvious that by approximately the year 2015 the ratio of male/female dentists will approach 60.0% male and 40% female dentists. The percentage of women in dentistry will rise significantly from less than 20% now to around 40% (or more) in 2015.
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