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"The most common reason (in 75%) for this gender preference was embarrassment," their research revealed. "Univariate analysis revealed that gender of the primary care physician (PCP), younger patient age, current employment, and no previous history of colonoscopy were predictors of preference for a woman endoscopist.

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2005 SEP 18 - (LawRx.com) -- Physician preference is seen as a barrier to colon cancer screening.

"The preference of women patients for women physicians has been shown in many specialties," observed investigators from the United States. "Women patients awaiting a lower endoscopy have been shown to have a preference for women endoscopists."

"The reasons for this preference and the strength of this preference have not been studied in the primary care setting," wrote S.B. Menees and colleagues "A questionnaire was given to female patients who were waiting for primary care appointments at 4 offices. Patients reported sociodemographic characteristics, experiences with colorectal cancer (CRC), barriers to CRC screening, gender preference of their physician, the significance, and reasons for this preference."

The authors reported, "A total of 202 women patients aged 40 to 70 years (mean 53 years) completed the questionnaire. Of these patients, 43% preferred a woman endoscopist, and of these, 87% would be willing to wait >30 days for a woman endoscopist, and 14% would be willing to pay more for one."

"The most common reason (in 75%) for this gender preference was embarrassment," their research revealed. "Univariate analysis revealed that gender of the primary care physician (PCP), younger patient age, current employment, and no previous history of colonoscopy were predictors of preference for a woman endoscopist. Of these variables, only female gender of the PCP (OR 2.84: 95% CI[1.49, 5.40]) and employment (OR 2.4: 95% CI[1.23, 4.67]) were positive predictors for a woman endoscopist preference by multivariable analysis; 5% stated that they would not undergo a colonoscopy unless guaranteed a woman endoscopist."

"The sole independent factor associated with adherence to screening was PCP recommendation (OR 2.93: 95% CI[1.63,

5.39])." The researchers concluded, "Women patients frequently prefer a woman endoscopist, and this preference is reported as being strong enough to delay the procedure and to incur personal expense. It is an absolute barrier to endoscopy according to 5% in this subset of women surveyed." The authors stressed that "interventions must be made in the primary care setting to address this issue and to increase the participation of women patients in CRC screening."

Menees and colleagues published their study in *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy* (Women patients' preference for women physicians is a barrier to colon cancer screening. *Gastrointest Endosc*, 2005;62(2):219-23).

For additional information, contact S.B. Menees, [University of Michigan](#), Division of Gastroenterology, Ann Arbor, USA.

Publisher contact information for the journal *Gastrointestinal Endoscopy* is: Mosby, Inc., 11830 Westline Industrial Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146-3318, USA.

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