

# The work-life integration overload: Thousands of researchers weigh in on outmoded work environments

March 8 2012

---

Attracting workers into science and technology fields could be hampered by work-life integration issues according to a new international survey. Drawing data from 4,225 publishing scientists and researchers worldwide, the Association for Women in Science (AWIS) finds that lack of flexibility in the workplace, dissatisfaction with career development opportunities and low salaries are driving both men and women to re-consider their profession.

More than half (54%) of all scientists and researchers said that [work demands](#) conflict with their personal lives at least 2-3 times per week.

Only a third of researchers agreed they work for family friendly institutions. A number said that their employers do not have spousal hire policies or that such policies are not available because of funding cuts.

Only half of the women (52%) reported that they are happy with their work-life integration, compared with 61% of men working in research across all fields.

One third of researchers say that ensuring good work-life integration has negatively impacted their careers and women (37%) were more likely than men (30%) to say this was the case. For those researchers with dependent children, 36% reported career problems.

Nearly 40% of women [respondents](#) have delayed having children because of their careers, while 27% of males indicated the same situation. A number of women mentioned waiting until they had a permanent position to get pregnant or noted that they could not afford to start a family on their [wages](#).

One in 10 researchers indicated that they expect to leave their current job within the next year. Of those intending to leave, [females](#) were twice as likely (12%) as males (6%) to cite a spouse's job offer or relocation as the reason. Of researchers intending to leave, 9% indicated it was because they were unable to balance work-life integration.

The survey was released during the convening of Global Experts on Work-Life Family Issues held by AWIS in New York this week and coincides with International Women's Day and the United Nation's 56th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Thirty-six percent of respondents were from Western Europe (including 6% United Kingdom, 6% Italy, 5% Germany, 3% Spain, 3% France). Twenty-eight percent were from North America (24% United States, 4% Canada). Twenty-two percent were from Asia Pacific (including 6% China 4% Japan). Six percent were from Latin America. Six percent were from Eastern Europe. The remaining two percent were from Africa and the Middle East.

"These findings confirm that work-life conflict is not gender-specific in the scientific community," said Janet Bandows Koster, AWIS executive director & CEO. "The real issue is that the academic workplace is still modeled on an ideal that no longer exists nor complements the realities of today's global workforce."

"If researchers who want a fulfilling home and work-life are being driven out of the industry through archaic working practices, it's time to address the system itself. Let's stop pointing the finger at [women](#) by

putting a "baby" band aid on the problem and solve the real issues," said Bandows Koster.

The survey results were collected in December 2011 and January 2012 with 4,225 scientists and authors responding. Of the respondents, 80% were married or partnered, 70% were male, 64% worked at a university and 83% worked 40 or more hours per week. Survey respondents were working scientists and researchers who publish academically across all disciplines.

Provided by Elsevier

Citation: The work-life integration overload: Thousands of researchers weigh in on outmoded work environments (2012, March 8) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-03-work-life-overload-thousands-outmoded-environments.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.