

## Special Issue of *Health Physics* Highlights Women in Radiation Protection

October 1, 2018 – A special [November issue](#) of *Health Physics* journal presents 13 original research papers, reviews, and commentaries related to women's contributions to and experiences in radiation protection and safety. *Health Physics*, the official journal of the [Health Physics Society](#) (HPS) is published in the Lippincott portfolio by [Wolters Kluwer](#).

All of the included studies and other articles were led by women, according to an introduction by Guest Editor Nicole E. Martinez, PhD, of Clemson University. She writes, "I see this special issue as providing an in-hand example of the commitment within the society to fostering an inclusive, well-rounded environment."

### Women's Contributions to Radiation Safety and Protection – Past, Present and Future

Health physicists are scientists specializing in radiation protection. They work in a wide range of fields, including hospitals, industry, nuclear power plants – anywhere radiation or radioactive material is used or found.

Highlighting the historic roles of several women pioneers in the radiation sciences, Dr. Martinez emphasizes the importance of "building community" in meeting critical goals for radiation protection.

Highlights of the special issue include:

- An essay by Ryoko Ando of Ethos in Fukushima, Japan, sharing her experience working with the public in the aftermath of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant accident. Scientific explanations alone failed to meet the needs of residents trying to rebuild their daily lives. Steps like measuring personal radiation dose and voluntary food monitoring were critical to regaining residents' trust. Ms. Ando writes, "[R]eviving trust was the most critical issue for science to become relevant in people's lives."
- An article by LTC Jama D. VanHorne-Sealy, Director of Health Physics at the US Army Public Health Center, highlights the accomplishments of women in health physics in the US Armed Forces. Their diverse and critical roles include radiation treatments for medical conditions, assessing chemical and radiation health risks, and ensuring the safety of personnel working on board nuclear-powered vessels. "Health physics and medical physics careers in the military provide a unique opportunity for women to excel and they have made monumental contributions to the medical community, to the military, and to the nation," the author writes.
- An article highlighting the "Presidential Perspectives" of the six women who have served as President of the Health Physics Society – beginning with Elda E. "Andy" Anderson, who served from 1959 to 1960. The five surviving women Past Presidents share brief reflections on their tenure, highlighting that "capability and accomplishment are independent of sex."

Other topics include new research on approaches in monitoring radiation exposure, the challenges of measuring the health impact of low doses of radiation, the changing role of the medical center radiation safety officer, and organizational issues in ensuring effective radiation safety practices. Noting that over half of the articles are student papers, Dr. Martinez voices how encouraging it is to see so many active and talented young scientists in the field.

Dr. Martinez also emphasizes that supporting women (and other under-represented minorities) doesn't mean not supporting men (or the well-represented majority). "It means making a conscious effort to hear and include perspectives that might not be the norm," she writes. "Neglecting to consider the whole of the membership can lead to loss of talent, less discovery, and hindrance of the advancement of the field."

**About Health Physics**

[Health Physics](#), first published in 1958, provides the latest research to a wide variety of radiation safety professionals including health physicists, nuclear chemists, medical physicists, and radiation safety officers with interests in nuclear and radiation science. The Journal allows professionals in these and other disciplines in science and engineering to stay on the cutting edge of scientific and technological advances in the field of radiation safety. The Journal publishes original papers, technical notes, articles on advances in practical applications, editorials, and correspondence. Journal articles report on the latest findings in theoretical, practical, and applied disciplines of epidemiology and radiation effects, radiation biology and radiation science, and radiation ecology, to name just a few.

**About the Health Physics Society**

[The Health Physics Society](#) (HPS), formed in 1956, is a scientific organization of professionals who specialize in radiation safety. Its mission is to support its members in the practice of their profession and to promote excellence in the science and practice of radiation safety. Today its members represent all scientific and technical areas related to radiation safety, including academia, government, medicine, research and development, analytical services, consulting, and industry in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Society is chartered in the United States as an independent nonprofit scientific organization and, as such, is not affiliated with any government or industrial organization or private entity.

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