

Female surgeons at St. Michael's Hospital recreate New Yorker magazine cover

2 Toronto surgeons say women in their field have come a long way, but have a long way to go

By Muriel Draaisma, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 23, 2017 4:14 PM ET Last Updated: Apr 23, 2017 4:14 PM ET

Female surgeons at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto have created their own version of a New Yorker magazine cover that illustrates a female surgical team in hues of blue.

The photo of Toronto female surgeons is one of hundreds of recreations of the New Yorker illustration that was published on the cover of its recent Health, Medicine & The Body Issue.

In the original illustration, four female surgeons wearing surgical caps and gowns look down, with the operating room lights above. The image is from the perspective of the patient on the operating room table.

Since the illustration was published, female surgeons around the world have donned their scrubs, stood together in circles in operating rooms, and photographed themselves. Then they have posted their own versions of the image online using the hashtag #ILookLikeASurgeon.

For Nancy Baxter, chief of the hospital's general surgery, and Jennifer Anderson, chief of the hospital's ear, nose and throat department, the original illustration and the photos recreating it are signs that female surgeons have come a long way, but they still have a long way to go.

Baxter said she was thrilled when she first saw the New Yorker cover.

"It's just not something you usually see," she said.

Anderson agreed.

"I thought it brought a lot of awareness to the fact that women are in surgery and have been very actively involved in the delivery of medicine for centuries, but now it's recognized as the same level as our male counterparts. I thought it was a very honourable way of illustrating it," she said.

Both surgeons said they hope the recreations of the illustration serve as encouragement to female medical students thinking of going into surgery.

Baxter said female medical students are discouraged from entering the field. As well, when they advance in the field, they are not identified as leaders because they are women.

"There's still this public perception that if you need surgery, it's going to be by a man," she said.

"Women who display an interest are already discouraged from an very early time. We're still not seen as the norm. This representation of us, in this beautiful way on this cover, I think, just speaks to our growing strength and growing numbers, but also speaks to the fact that, given it's such a surprise to see women portrayed this way, that we've got a long way to go."

Anderson said her experience was different because she was encouraged by at least three male professors to go into surgery.

Tough but rewarding career

Both surgeons said it's a tough but rewarding career because surgeons see the impact of their work on a person quickly.

As for the photo itself, Anderson said it took some doing to get everybody together.

"It was hard to get that many surgeons together because we are all really busy."

The New Yorker says the illustration has taken on a life of its own.

Explore CBC			
CBC Home	Music	Documentaries	Digital Archives
TV	Life	Comedy	Games
Radio	Arts	Books	Contests
News	Kids	Parents	Site Map
Sports	Local	Indigenous	
Stay Connected			
Apps	RSS	Podcasts	Newsletters & Alerts
Services and Information			
Corporate Info	Reuse & Permission	CBC Shop	Jobs
Public Appearances	Terms of Use	Help	Doing Business with Us
Commercial Services	Privacy Policy	Contact Us	Renting Facilities
CBC  Radio-Canada	©2017 CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved		Visitez Radio-Canada.ca