

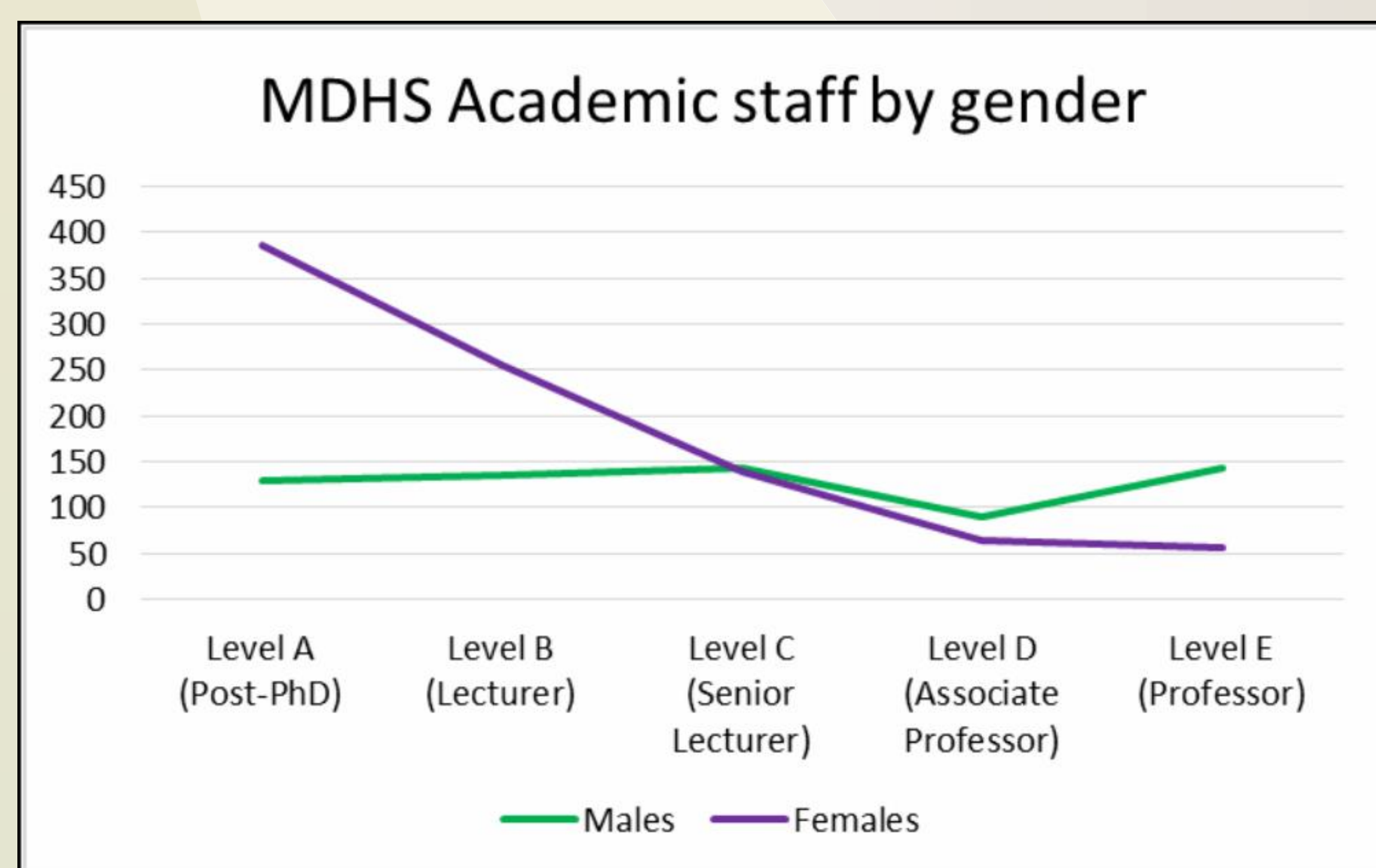
Mentoring: A focus on organisational change to enable individual careers

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INTRODUCTION

Mentoring programs are commonly used to help individual women advance in their careers. We report on a successful mentoring program that uses innovative design to address organisational change, as well as individual development. The program has been operating in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS), The University of Melbourne, Australia since 2011, and is currently in its fifth year of implementation. The Faculty has 2200 employees, with 70% academic and 30% administrative staff. Women are under-represented in senior faculty, **with women only totalling to 28% of all professors.**



AIM

The aim of the mentoring program is to create an organisational culture that strives towards gender equity, while at the same time, enabling individuals to reach their full potential.

APPROACH

The mentoring program is open to men and women, and academic and administrative staff. Each year, different classification levels are targeted, with mentees invited to apply. Each mentee is matched with a senior mentor and a peer mentoring group, with development workshops conducted for mentees and mentors.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDE:

- 1) Peer mentoring groups of 5-6 mentees work on shared objectives.
- 2) Mentors are assisted to develop two-way developmental relationships with mentees, where both parties can understand the organisation from each other's perspectives.
- 3) Mentors and mentees are encouraged to strengthen informal mentoring and sponsorship practices in their workplaces.
- 4) The program finale brings together mentees, mentors and the Faculty senior leadership to highlight systemic organisational issues identified by peer groups.

RESULTS

To date, 273 staff have participated either as a mentee and/or as a mentor. **Women made up 79% of mentees and 65% of mentors.**

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM HAS SHOWN THAT THE ORGANISATION HAS BENEFITED THROUGH:

- greater understanding of systemic problems; eg limitations of one year employment contracts for early career women researchers, which has since been revised.
- improved organisational culture where mentoring is now seen as normal practice.

INDIVIDUALS HAVE BENEFITED THROUGH:

- learning new skills
- building new professional networks
- developing a deeper understanding of the faculty and university and their role within it; and
- personal development through new insights, attitudes and self confidence.

CULTURE MAPS



One strategy used to develop greater organisational awareness for mentees is culture mapping. This example of a culture map developed by one peer mentoring group shows the following organisational themes:

- Centralised hierarchy and sense of disconnectedness from 'centre'
- Islands and feelings of separation of organisational units
- Perceived uneven funding distribution between units
- Managing individual career insecurities: sense of "survival of the fittest"
- Planning for the potential 'storms' in terms of career progress

KEY MESSAGES

- MENTORING PROGRAMS NEED TO FOCUS ON ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR
- THE USE OF PEER MENTORING IS A POWERFUL STRATEGY TO ENABLE MENTEES TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER AND BECOME CHANGE AGENTS IN THEIR WORKPLACE
- HAVING MENTEES REPORTING BACK TO SENIOR LEADERS PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SYSTEMIC ISSUES TO BE HEARD AND ADDRESSED

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