



# Characterizing Medicare Reimbursements and Clinical Activity among Female Otolaryngologists

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## Purpose

Assess unique demographic trends and practice patterns across female ORLs in 2017 using data on billing and reimbursements for Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) patients

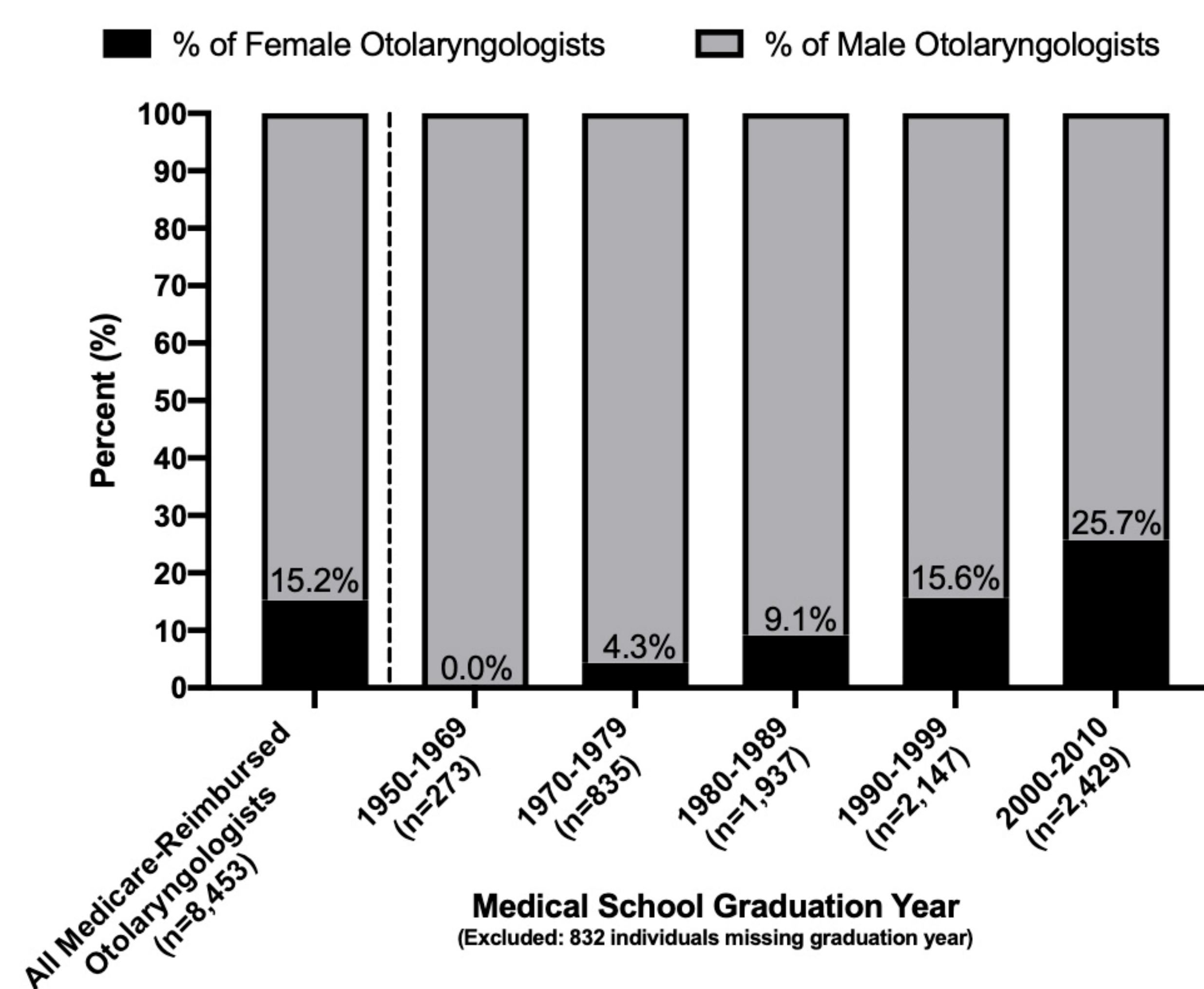
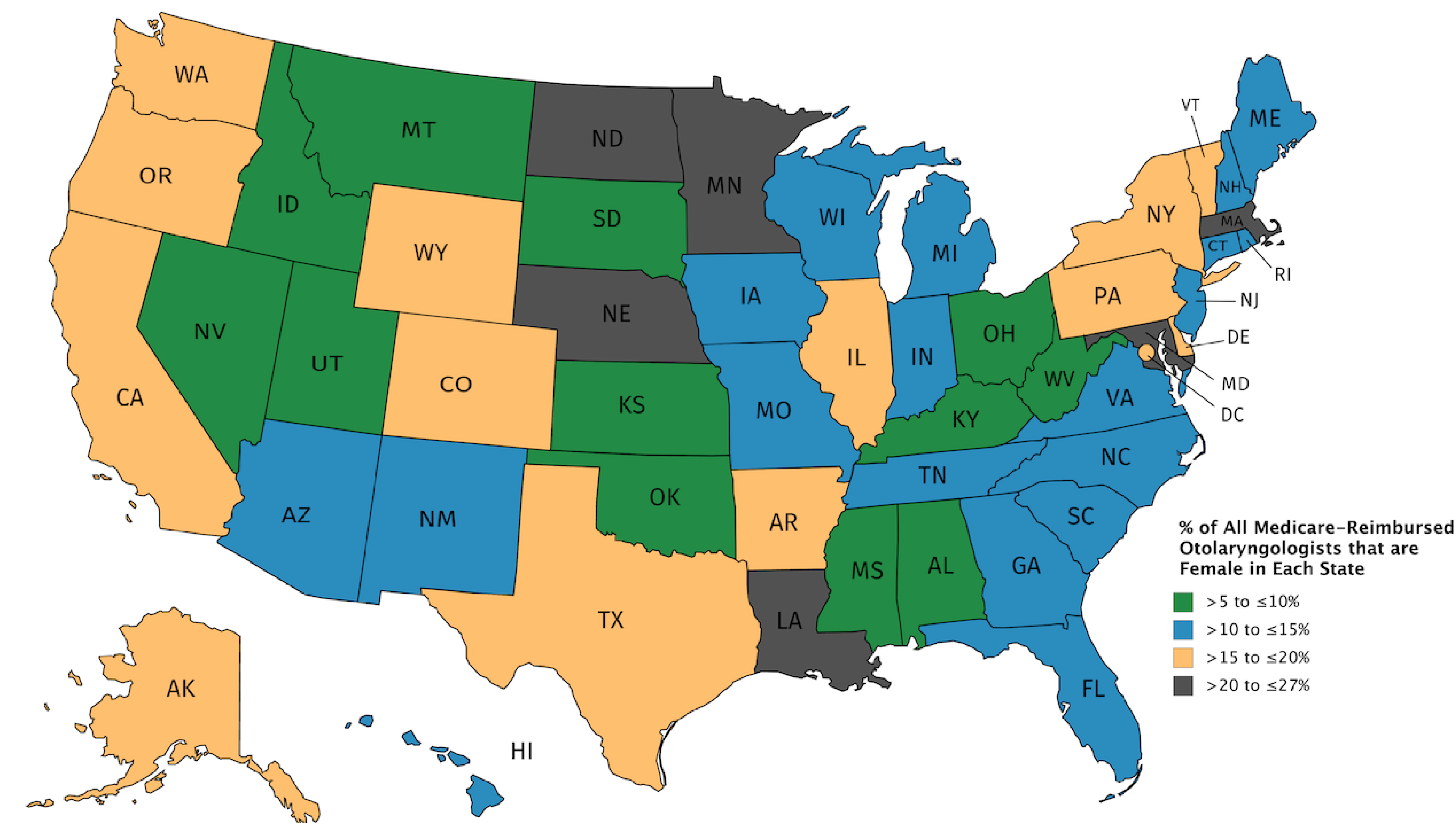
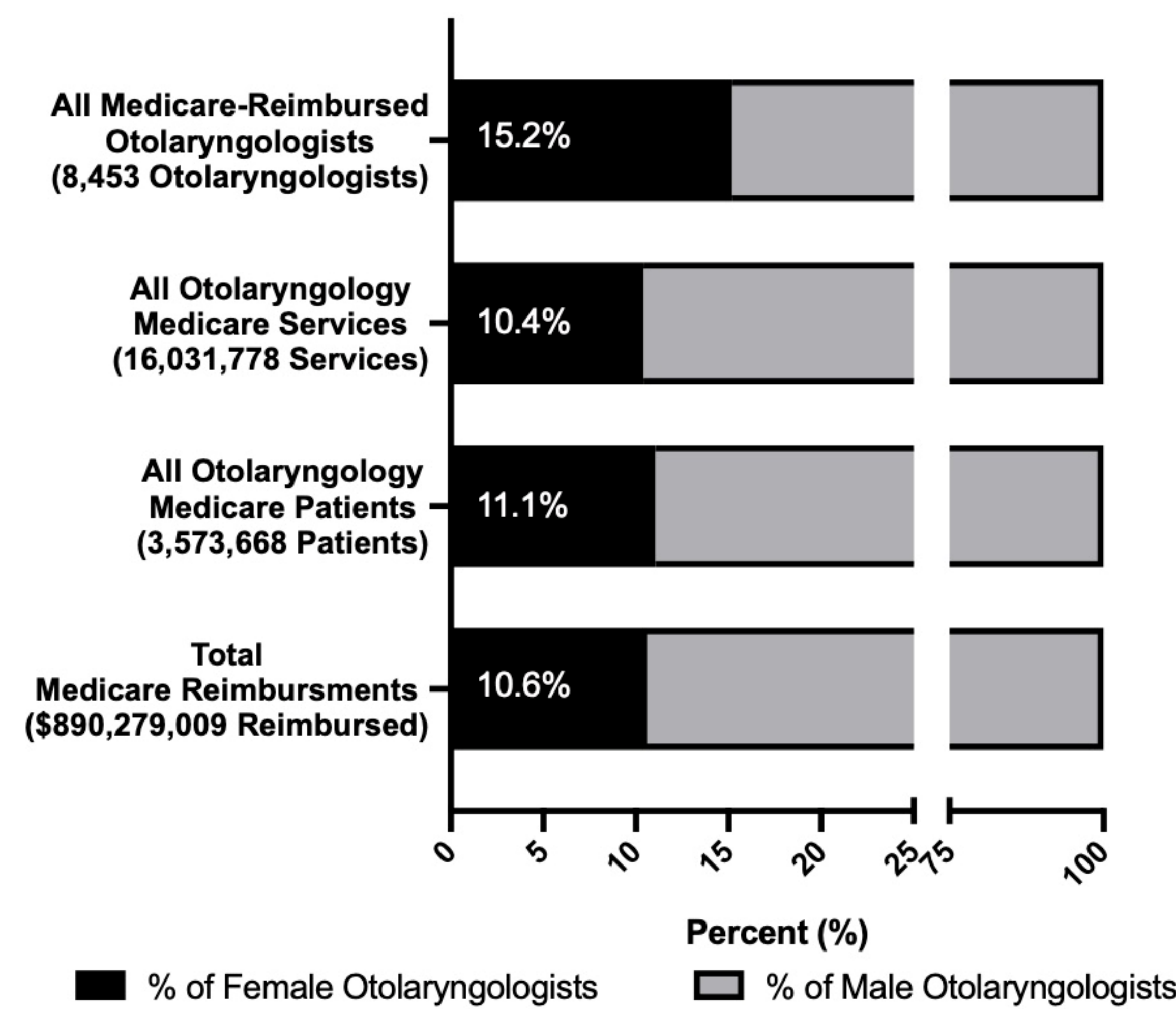
## Background

- Female representation within ORL is rising. In 2017, females comprised 36.2% of ORL residents and fellows<sup>1</sup>
- Female ORLs may earn 15-20% less than male counterparts<sup>2</sup>
- Recent study by Miller et al. suggested female ORLs may bill for fewer services and received decreased Medicare payments compared to male counterparts<sup>3</sup>
- Dearth of literature describing practice patterns unique to female ORLs

## Methods

- Cross-sectional analysis using publicly-reported data from 2017 Medicare Physician and Other Supplier Aggregate File, containing providers who performed >10 services on >10 Medicare FFS patients
- Chi-squared test used to analyze categorical variables
- Kruskal-Wallis test employed for non-normally distributed continuous variables. Risk-adjusted differences assessed using multivariable regression models

## Results



		Total Medicare Payments (\$) <sup>A</sup>		Total Services		Total Patients	
		Adjusted Median Difference (95% CI)	p value	Adjusted Median Difference (95% CI)	p value	Adjusted Median Difference (95% CI)	p value
Setting	Urban	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
	Rural	-6,719 (-19,534 to 6,096)	0.304	268 (61.6 to 474.4)	0.011	6.0 (-45.6 to 57.6)	0.819
Region	Northeast	11,311 (1,595 to 21,028)	0.023	207.9 (51.4 to 364.4)	0.009	60.0 (20.9 to 99.1)	<b>0.003</b>
	South	9,983 (1,239 to 18,727)	0.025	234.2 (93.3 to 375.0)	<b>0.001</b>	47.0 (11.8 to 82.2)	0.009
	Midwest	-5,268 (-15,178 to 4,642)	0.297	-5.0 (-164.6 to 154.6)	0.951	3.1 (-36.8 to 43.0)	0.879
	West	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
Graduation Year	1970-1979	-13,054 (-32,701 to 6,592)	0.193	218.8 (-97.6 to 535.2)	0.175	-14.1 (-93.2 to 64.9)	0.726
	1980-1989	6,106 (-3,655 to 15,866)	0.220	423.0 (265.8 to 580.2)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	113.0 (73.7 to 152.3)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
	1990-1999	9,141 (1,354 to 16,928)	0.021	289.8 (164.3 to 415.2)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	67.0 (35.6 to 98.3)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
	2000-2010	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref	Ref
	Unknown	-27,858 (-39,707 to -16,009)	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-225.0 (-415.9 to -34.2)	0.021	-77.2 (-124.9 to -29.5)	<b>0.002</b>

## Conclusions

- In 2017, 15.2% of practicing ORLs were female with the proportion of females-to-total-ORLs varying from 5.0% in Idaho to 26.2% in Nebraska
- Female ORLs further along in their careers were reimbursed more and saw a higher number of patients in addition to performing more total services and services per patient compared to those earlier in their careers
- Significantly fewer female ORLs practiced in rural settings compared to males
- Female ORLs practicing in urban settings may perform fewer services per patient and utilize fewer unique CPT codes compared to counterparts in rural areas
- Need for further research characterizing unique practice trends among female ORLs

## References

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