

# Status of Women in the National Labs

A Brief Summary of Current Knowledge from COACH Research

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# Data Sources

## Internet-based surveys – three sites

- Women only at two sites and both men and women at one
- One lab near a large city, one in more rural setting, one very closely tied with a university (but very small sample)

## Interviews – two sites

## Group discussion/focus groups – one site

## Workshops – two sites

# Satisfaction with Work Life and Career (Women only)

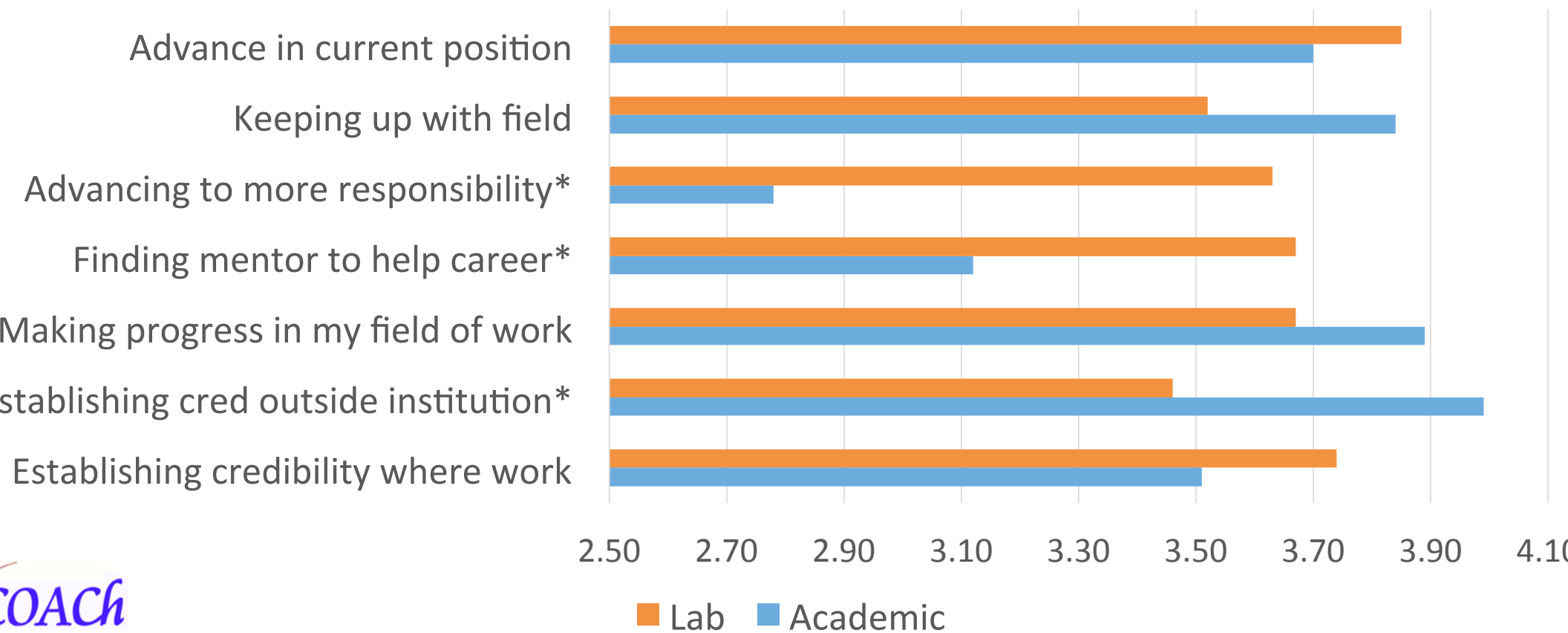
Relatively high satisfaction (>70% somewhat or very satisfied) with access to supplies and equipment, journals and scholarly material and “overall” with their job

Lower satisfaction (<40% satisfied)

- recognition of accomplishments by others
- mentoring from others in department
- scholarly productivity

Women at the lab with close ties with a University were more satisfied

# Lab Women Have More Concerns than Academic Women in Some Areas (5=very concerned)



# Relatively Low Confidence of Lab Women in Ability to Control Career-Related Areas

Half (51% to 56%) moderately or very confident could

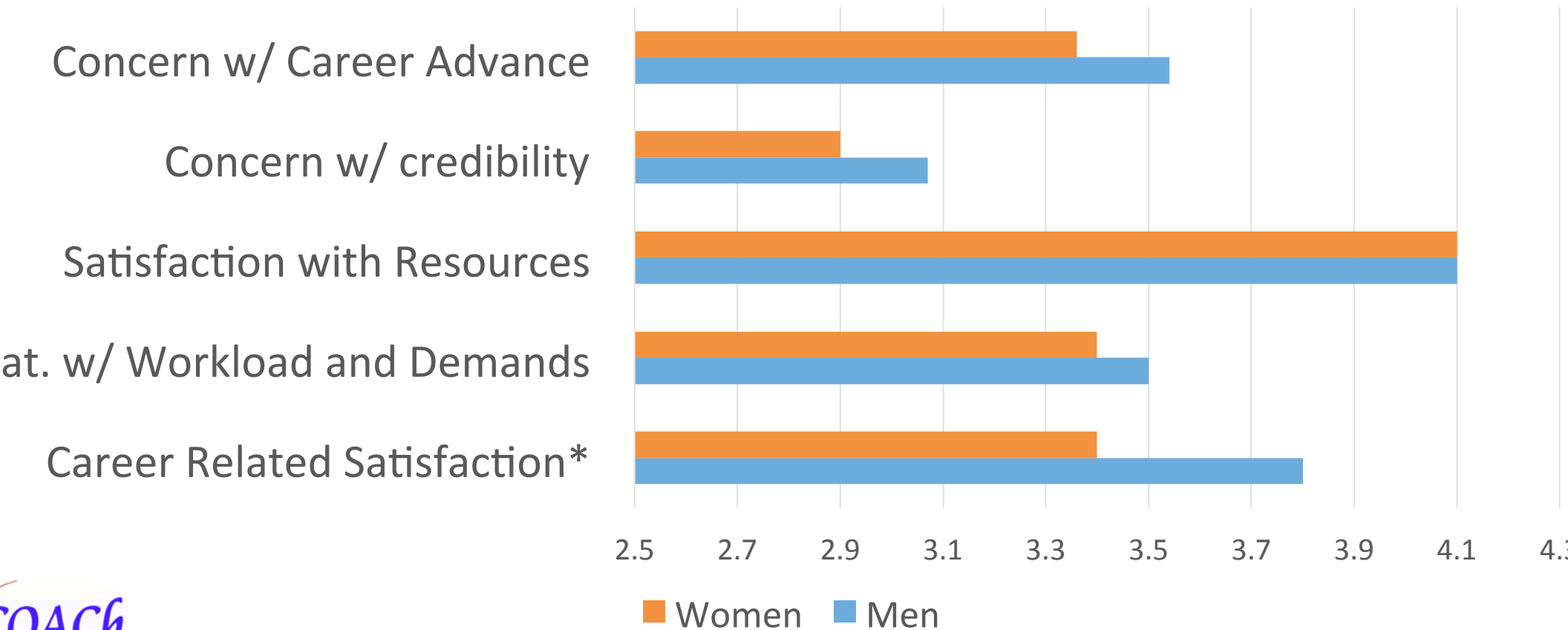
- balance work and family responsibilities in a personally satisfying way
- provide convincing arguments in group settings
- get support from colleagues in workplace

Less than 20% (7% to 18%) were confident they could

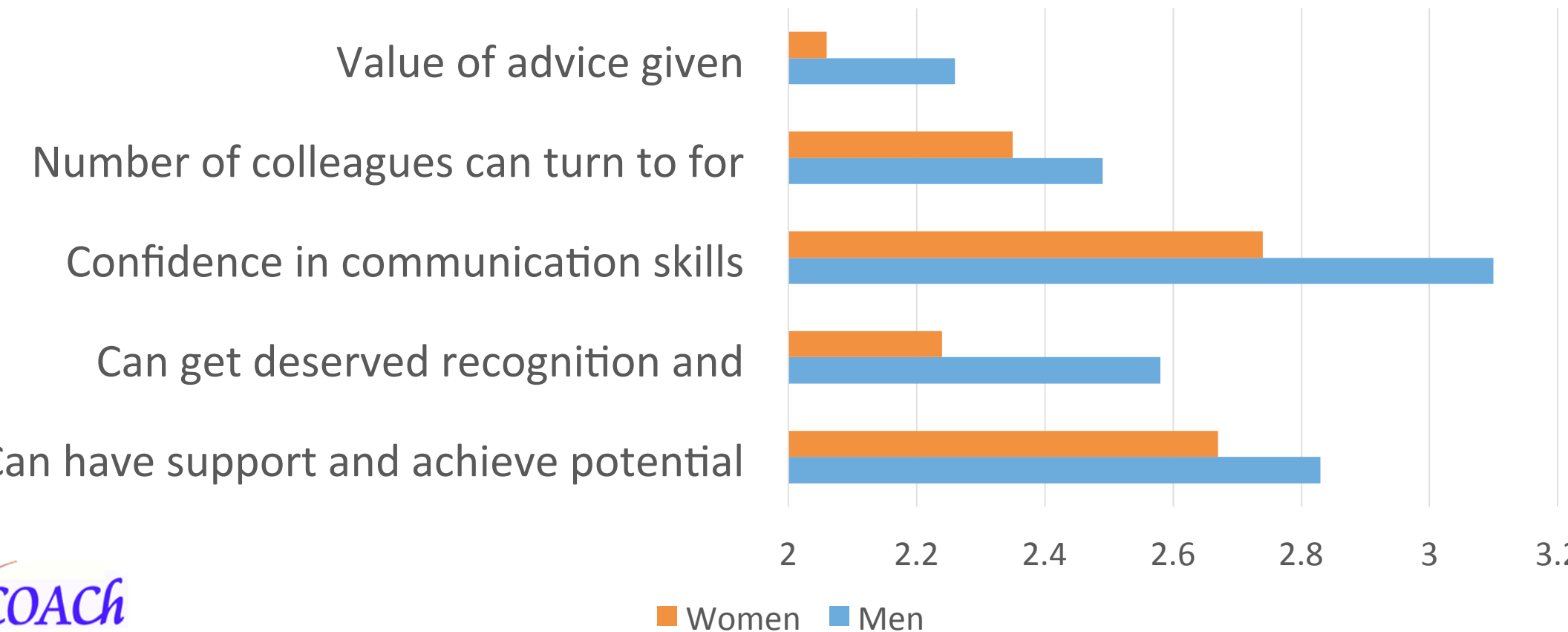
- negotiate successfully for own career
- control career destiny
- receive deserved recognition from department
- receive deserved recognition from profession

Lab Women Associated with University More Confident

# Men Have Fewer Career-Related Concerns and Are More Satisfied



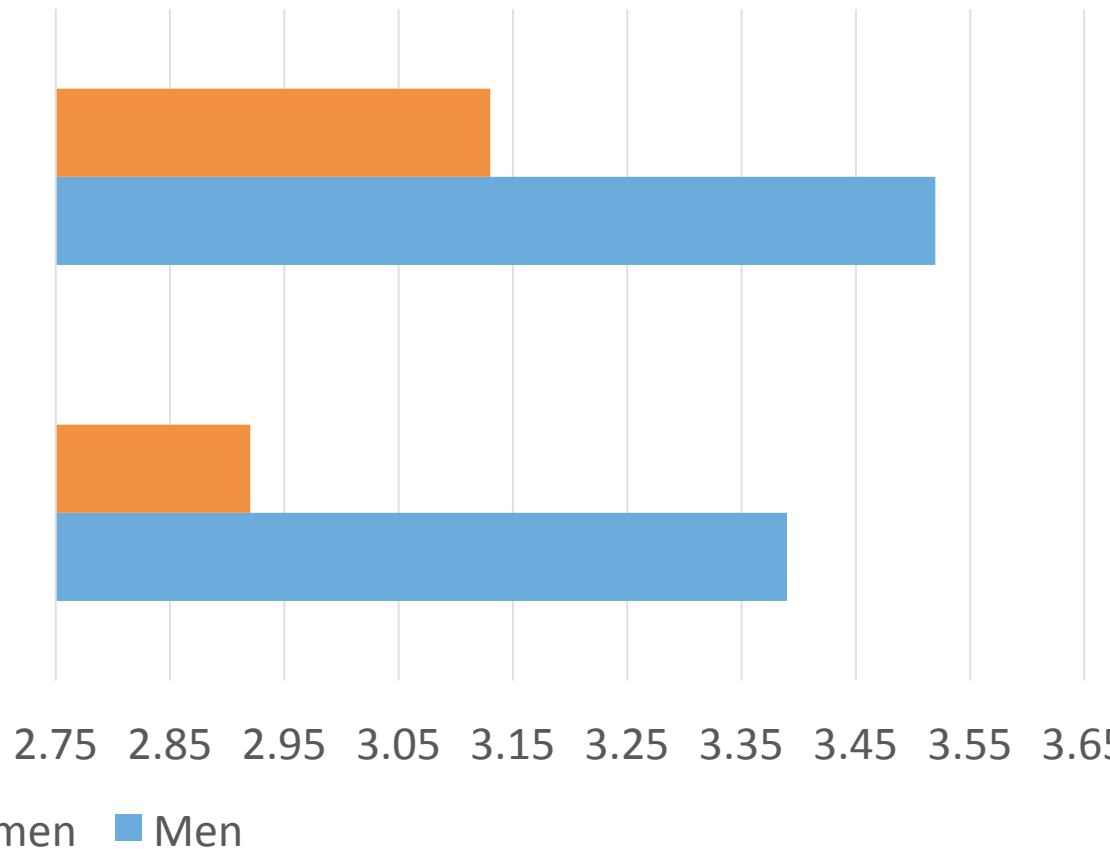
# Men More Confident in Attaining Potential and Receiving Career-Related Advice



# Men More Likely than Women to Perceive that Female Employees and Minority Employees are Treated Fairly

Racial/ethnic minority employees treated fairly\*

Female employees treated fairly\*





# Interviews

26 at lab near large urban center

- All women
- Self selected

12 at large lab in more rural area

- Both men and women
- Chosen by administrators

# Common Themes from Interviews – Site 1

## Positive Areas

- Great enthusiasm for their work and their science
- Support receive from others, including a women scientist group
- Diversity of staff
- Location of lab and facilities and programs, including childcare

## Problematic Areas

- Lack of validation of work
- Lack of transparency in procedures and policies and variability from one area of lab to another
- Few opportunities for professional advancement
- Negative experiences with Office of Human Resources
- Unskilled, insensitive managers who have problems dealing with issues including those related to gender

# Common Themes – Site 2

## Positive Elements

- Love of science and work that can do at the lab
- Support received in start-up and moving
- Flexibility in schedules

## Problematic Areas

- Lack of transparency and variability from one area of lab to another
- Unskilled, insensitive managers, unwilling/unable to counter sexist interactions
- Lack of mobility, advancement opportunities, flat structure
- Lack of on-site childcare
- General climate produced by very low representation of women
- Desire for change but strong administrative roadblocks

# Some preliminary general observations

There are issues related to gender equity at the labs

Variability across labs

Variability within labs

Some common issues are related to structural factors (e.g. flat structure, lack of transparency, power of HR relative to scientists)

Other issues related to reluctance or inability to tap expertise and energy within the labs to address issues (e.g. issue of perceived “small pool” of qualified women and lack of child care)

Strong desire for a more equitable environment

- Expressed by both women and men
- Indicates the possibility of change



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