Introduction
In Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, active practicing women physicians make up 12.7% of otolaryngologists according to American Medical Association statistics from 2010. Women make up 32.3% of otolaryngology residents training in 2010 in the United States. Despite this increase of women in the field of otolaryngology, there is a persistent lag in women representation in leadership positions. One such area is female representation on editorial boards of major academic journals in otolaryngology.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the proportion of female board members on the editorial boards of major Otolaryngology journals over a seven year period with emphasis on board turnover and diversity.

Methods
Five journals related to the field of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery were surveyed between the years of 2006-2012 to assess member demographics and member turnover rates. Specific information regarding both male and female members, including year of board certification, ethnicity, geographic location and academic rank were obtained from publicly available sources using internet search. Journal impact factor was used to quantify location and academic rank were obtained from American Medical Association statistics from 2010. However the range is variable with women in 2012, compared to 14.6% and 20.5% in 2006 respectively. The level of redundancy appears to be lower in 2012, compared to 14.6% and 20.5% in 2006 respectively. However the range is variable with women holding ‘editor in chief’ positions and only three journals had women in ‘associated or executive editor’ positions.

Overall board turnover rates remain low; one journal notably have, over the course of the last 7 years, improved the percentage of women on their boards. Overall board turnover rates remain low, however spikes in board turnover are likely associated with inciting events. Increased board turnover appears to crudely correlate with higher impact factor, however there are likely multiple other contributing factors.

Discussion
Over the last 7 years, there appears to be a trend towards an increase in representation of women on editorial boards in otolaryngology. In reference to the percentage of practicing women otolaryngologists (12.7%), women are currently proportionately represented on editorial boards. There is marked under-representation in one journal. Women appear to be less adequately represented in higher positions on the boards of the journals reviewed. Increased board turnover rates overall appear to crudely correlate with higher impact factor.

Conclusions
There appears to be adequate representation of women on the boards of the major journals reviewed in otolaryngology when compared to the percentage of women currently practicing otolaryngology. Although overall women appear to have less board certified years, there is no difference in regards to academic rank. Two journals notably have, over the course of the last 7 years, improved the percentage of women on their boards. Overall board turnover rates remain low, however spikes in board turnover are likely associated with inciting events. Increased board turnover appears to crudely correlate with higher impact factor, however there are likely multiple other contributing factors.

References