

Small Particles, Big Issues: PRIORITYze DEI

Issue 9 20/10/2023: The importance of sex and gender reporting.

Dear all,

We hope this email finds you well.

As reported by Jessica Miles in her article "The importance of sex and gender reporting" (<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/editors-update/the-importance-of-sex-and-gender-reporting>) in the intricate tapestry of society, the threads of sex and gender are interwoven, influencing every facet of our lives. While their significance has often been underestimated in academic research, a seismic shift has occurred recently. Stakeholders spanning funding bodies, researchers, institutions, and publishers have united to champion gender balance in study teams, editorial boards, and research institutions. This transformation extends beyond representation, as they've also recognized the vital role of sex and gender analysis within the research itself. This dimension is not just an additive but a fundamental factor that profoundly influences research quality and outcomes.

Let's delve into this compelling narrative that underscores the importance of sex and gender analysis in research.

Unveiling the Dynamics:

One potent example lies in the investigation of COVID-19. Disaggregated data starkly reveals higher mortality rates for men compared to women. Yet, to comprehend the underlying causes, researchers must disentangle the potential effects of biological sex differences from those stemming from gender norms. This complexity demonstrates how sex and gender can intertwine to yield impactful conclusions.

The Dimension of Sex and Gender:

Sex and gender are distinct yet interconnected concepts. Ignoring their influence can lead to skewed conclusions, perpetuate knowledge gaps, widen disparities, and amplify inequality. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 scenario, their interaction can bear profound implications.

Advancing the Paradigm:

Progress has been achieved in elevating standards of sex and gender analysis. The SAGER (Sex and Gender Equity in Research) guidelines, pioneered by the European Association of Science Editors (EASE), stand as a significant milestone. Numerous life sciences and biomedical journals, including those under Elsevier, have embraced these guidelines, amplifying the clarion call for inclusion and diversity. However, challenges persist, necessitating sustained efforts.

A Coalition for Change:

In a resolute bid for transformation, Elsevier has established an external Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) Board. This consortium is extending sex and gender reporting guidelines to engineering and computer science domains, engaging editors and publishers in this journey. Collaborative initiatives with early career researchers, including webinars and training materials, are also on the horizon.

Fostering Change:

Transcending norms requires collective action. Researchers, funders, policymakers, and editors have pivotal roles in embracing sex and gender as integral research considerations. As advocates of scholarly rigor, editors are instrumental in setting and enforcing reporting standards.

We invite you to take a look at the full article and its attachments hoping it will be food for thought in integrating diversity and inclusion into your research process.

Best regards

Mariasole and Camilla