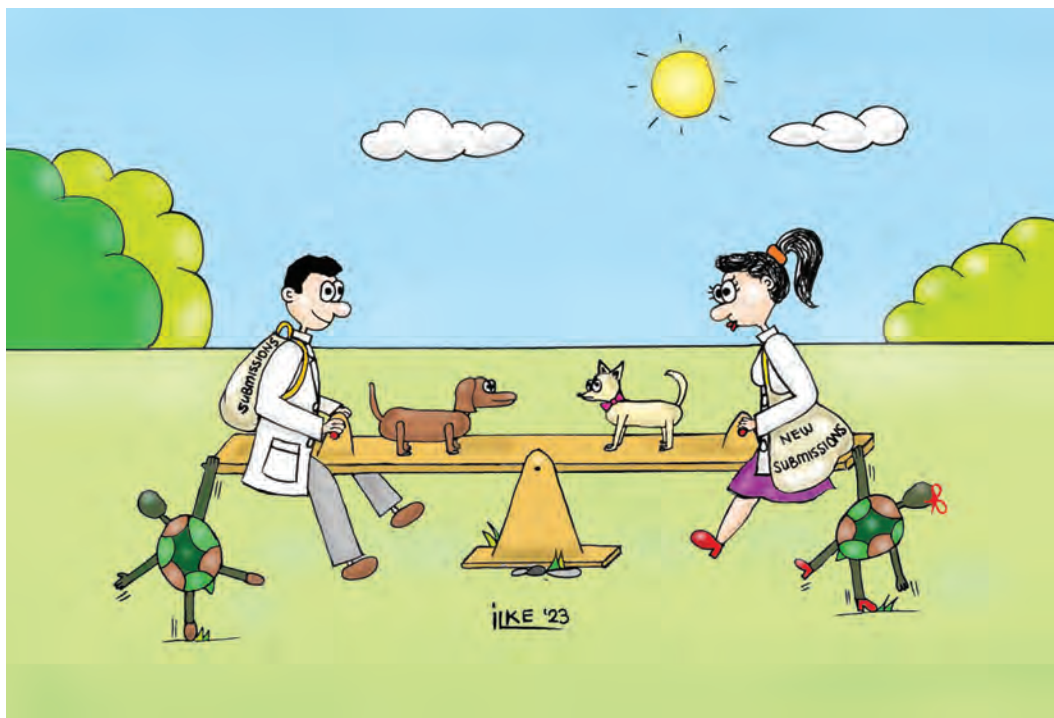


# Is There Gender Equity in Science Editing?

Ilke Coskun Benlidayi



Gender inequity has plagued scientific editing and publishing from the beginning, but there are signs of slow improvement. Over time, the percentage of women serving in leadership positions at scientific journals has increased.<sup>1</sup> However, there is still underrepresentation of women in the field of publishing as authors, editors, and reviewers.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of authorship, the inequity is apparent, particularly in last authorships and in fields such as science, engineering, technology, and mathematics.<sup>2</sup> In terms of editorship, the issue is more apparent in editor-in-chief (EIC) positions. Gollins et al.<sup>1</sup> analyzed previous and current

EICs of 25 dermatology journals. The results revealed that less than 19% of EICs were female, and moreover, 45.8% of journals had never had a female EIC, either. With regard to the journals that had a female EIC (n = 13), it was only after the year 2000 that 61.5% selected their first female EIC.<sup>1</sup> A recent study by Liu et al.<sup>3</sup> evaluated the gender of editors from more than 10,000 journals and 15 disciplines over 5 decades. Percentages of women among editors and EICs were 14% and 8%, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Lin and Li<sup>4</sup> analyzed 68 top psychology journals in 10 subdisciplines and found that the percentage of female editorship differed across subdisciplines, scholarships, and geographic regions. The ratio of female editorship was lower in method journals when compared to empirical and review journals and higher in North America than in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Wang et al.<sup>5</sup> further identified that journal impact factor did not have a significant effect on gender representation in editorial boards.

Gender inequity on editorial boards has inevitable consequences in terms of scholarly publishing. For

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instance, underrepresentation of female editors may lead to a consideration that the journal is not open to all authors, which may eventually discourage women from participation in science.<sup>3</sup> Besides, female scientists would miss out on the benefits of editorial board membership (e.g., opportunities for intellectual growth and networking), which may in turn interfere with their career development.<sup>6</sup>

There is now an effort to ensure diversity in workplaces and teams, but this requires a systematic change. Every individual should be considered in an equal manner while making policy changes and giving promotions.<sup>7</sup> Monitoring gender diversity in editorial boards, providing a vision, and setting a plan can pave the way for a change in gender diversity in science editing.<sup>8</sup> Targeting gender balance in the academic arena would be of benefit. As an example, a cross-sectional study based on data from European League Against Rheumatism scientific member societies in 13 countries showed that there were gender differences in career progression in academic rheumatology. The number of women in academic rheumatology was lower than that in clinical rheumatology. Moreover, women tended to be under-represented in senior roles in academia. Therefore, inducing gender-equitable career advancement in the academic arena is of utmost importance.<sup>9</sup> Some countries have founded women associations in rheumatology. The aim of these associations is to support the education and advancement of women in the field of rheumatology.<sup>10</sup> Inequity can be reduced, and identifying the potential causes of gender imbalance is a crucial step to address the barriers that result in inequities and to move forward in science.<sup>11</sup>

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