Psychiatry research and Gender diversity: Authorships, Editors, and Reviewers

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Short title: Psychiatry and gender diversity

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Despite notorious progress, gender inequality continues to exist in most scientific fields\(^1\), including medicine\(^2,3\). A recent gender analysis of authors who publish in The Lancet journals\(^4\) found that women only represent about one third of the authorships, which is striking considering that women make up more than half of the graduates in the medical sciences\(^5\). Nevertheless, that study showed a noteworthy exception: female representation in *The Lancet Psychiatry* was 45%, and it rose to 51% among first authors.

Expanding the focus, we selected 40 journals (Web of Science, PSYCHIATRY category) to examine their authorships, editors, and peer-reviewers. The selection consisted of the top ten journals from each quartile (Q1-Q4) of the impact-factor distribution (see journals in appendix).

All the articles and reviews published in the 40 journals during the years 2015-17 were extracted. From a total of 103,995 authorships, gender could be identified in 87,642 (81.4%) of them. Women represented 43% of all the known-gender authorships, and somewhat less (39.3%) in the case of reviews (Table 1). Figure 1 shows the overall percentage of women in each quartile and the corresponding percentages as first or last author (absolute values in the appendix). Three observations are pertinent.

A) Women are less present in higher impact journals (Q1).

B) Women are overrepresented as first authors of the articles, surpassing men (more than 50%) in the last three quartiles. The first author is usually the one who has made the most substantial contribution in terms of time and performance; in many cases, they are junior researchers publishing their first postdoctoral papers.

C) Women are clearly underrepresented as the last or senior author in the article by-lines.

Regarding the journal edition, only 10% of the editors-in-chief are females. Women represent 30.8% of the staff editors and 24.2% of the editorial boards. We obtained lists of peer-reviewers from seventeen journals and women were one third of them.
In summary, psychiatry shows a smaller gender asymmetry than other medical fields, but it has not yet achieved gender parity among scientists, particularly in publications with more visibility and higher impact. In the authorships, we observed a double pattern also found in other contemporary gender studies\(^1\): an overrepresentation of women as first authors and a pronounced underrepresentation as senior authors. This fact, along with a lower proportion of women among editors and peer-reviewers, suggests that age might play a certain modulating role in the gender composition of psychiatry researchers.

References


Table 1. Overall values for Authorships, Editors, and Reviewers of 40 journals selected from the PSYCHIATRY category of the Web of Science database.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender identified</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authorships (2015-17)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers (Articles + Reviews)</td>
<td>103,995</td>
<td>87,642</td>
<td>49,947 (57.0)</td>
<td>37,695 (43.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>97,236</td>
<td>81,673</td>
<td>46,325 (56.7)</td>
<td>35,348 (43.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews</td>
<td>6,759</td>
<td>5,969</td>
<td>3,622 (60.7)</td>
<td>2,347 (39.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Editors</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Editors-in-chief</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43 (89.6)</td>
<td>5 (10.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editors</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>229 (69.2)</td>
<td>102 (30.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Editorial Boards</td>
<td>1,585</td>
<td>1,567</td>
<td>1,188 (75.8)</td>
<td>379 (24.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reviewers (17 journals)</strong></td>
<td>9,495</td>
<td>8,858</td>
<td>5,813 (65.6)</td>
<td>3,045 (34.4)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Figure 1. Representation of women as authors of Articles and Reviews published during the 2015-17 period in 40 journals selected from the Web of Science (Category PSYCHIATRY). The journals are grouped by quartiles within the category, according to their impact factor (JCR-2017). Last position values were calculated for articles with at least three co-authors. Numerical values are available in the Supplementary Material.