

NEWS

Women outnumbered among editors of top journals in neuroscience, but not in autism

BY NIKO MCCARTY

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About 48 percent of editors of autism-specific journals are women, according to a *Spectrum* analysis. That fraction is far higher than for neuroscience journals, for which just **30 percent of editors are women**, according to a study published Monday in *Nature Neuroscience*.

The new study looked at editors at the top 50 English-language journals in neuroscience and psychology, as ranked by the Clarivate Analytics' Science Citation Index Expanded list. Just five journals had an editorial board made up of at least 50 percent women: *Nature Neuroscience*, *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, *Nature Human Behavior*, *Progress in Neurobiology* and *Acta Neuropathologica Communications*.

The findings mirror the underrepresentation of women among U.S. neuroscience faculty; women account for about 30 percent of full professors, 37 percent of associate professors and 45 percent of assistant professors, according to a **2019 analysis** by BiasWatchNeuro, a website that tracks racial and gender representation in neuroscience and psychology. (BiasWatchNeuro is funded by a grant from the Simons Foundation, *Spectrum's* parent organization.)

"Our findings reiterate what's been shown in other fields," says lead investigator **Eleanor Palser**, a postdoctoral scholar in neurology at the University of California, San Francisco. "Generally speaking, you have a preponderance of men on the editorial boards of these journals and also those affiliated with the U.S."

Palser manually collected data on each editor's perceived gender and country of affiliation, based on a publicly available biography or internet search. Those data revealed that 57 percent of neuroscience editors are based in North America (and 52 percent in the United States alone), whereas 29 percent are based in Europe, 9 percent in Asia, 1 percent in Latin America and less than 0.5 percent in Africa.

The fraction of women editors at autism-specific journals is far higher, according to a *Spectrum* analysis. Across three journals — *Autism*, *Autism Research* and the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* — nearly half of editors are women. But the country data are similarly skewed; more than 65 percent of autism editors are based in the United States and about 12 percent in the United Kingdom. Just one editor across the three journals is based in Africa (**Petrus de Vries**, a South African physician-scientist who was recently profiled by *Spectrum*).

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