

Gender Award Gap? (In) visibility of women in medical recognition cultures

Background

The proportion of female employees in the field of medical research has been increasing for years. Nevertheless, prizes and awards in the field of medical research are given to women with below-average frequency. This is of crucial relevance, as prizes and awards - along with citation-based evaluation indices, third-party funding and leadership positions - are considered key indicators of professional achievements in research and significantly shape the further course of a professional career. Awards contribute to the visibility of the recipient in the scientific community as well as in the public perception and for external funders. Recent studies suggest that women in medicine not only receive fewer awards than men across disciplines, but they also receive less prestigious and lower endowed awards. It is therefore reasonable to hypothesize that it is not (only) the quantity of scientific awards that impedes the visibility of women in the recognition cultures of medicine, but a disadvantage also in the awarding of prestigious and career-enhancing prizes.

Aims

The aim of this project is to explore to what extent a "gender award gap" (corresponding to previous well-established phenomena such as the gender pay gap or the gender citation gap) is present in the recognition cultures of medicine in Germany. Furthermore, strategies to increase the visibility of women in scientific recognition processes in medicine will be developed

Methods

Analysis of a possible gender award gap (work packages [WP] 1 and 2)

- Quantitative evaluation of all awards (n=685) of medical societies in Germany for the period 2000-2020. Survey of the gender proportion with regard to different award types (honors, competitive awards, junior awards/scholarships, "women's awards") (WP 1)
- Analysis of the award cultures of selected professional societies with a) above-average or b) below-average proportion of female awardees among the prestigious awards (WP 1)
- Online survey of members of medical societies addressing their perception of award procedures (WP 2)
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews with key players on the subject of award procedures (WP 2)

Strategies to increase the visibility of women in recognition cultures in medicine (WP 3).

A variety of different measures will be developed during the project - also based on our findings. These include:

- Dissemination of the project findings via own website and own Twitter account
- Conception of a workshop "How do I get a prize?" for female scientists as an advanced training course at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf
- Preparation of a handout for mentors on the formulation of nominations and letters of recommendation for women scientists
- Creation of a handout for medical societies to support equal opportunity awarding processes for female and male aspirants.

Relevance

Systematic visualization of the functions and prestige of prizes, as well as the prize populations in medical societies, will enable the development of reflective strategies for gender-responsive prize policies.

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