

Original Article

Gender balance in infectious diseases and hospital epidemiology journals

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Abstract

Objective: Diversity is recognized as a driver of excellence and innovation. Women represent a significant part of the infectious diseases (ID) and hospital epidemiology (HE) workforce. We aimed to assess gender representation among editors of top ID and HE journals and explore potential correlations with the gender of first and last authors in published articles.

Methods: Using Scimago Journal & Country Rank, we identified 40 ID and 4 HE high-ranking journals. Editorial members were categorized by decision-making influence (levels I–III). We retrieved names of first and corresponding authors from 12 ID-focused journals' 2019 research articles. Gender assignment for editors, first authors, and last authors utilized digital galleries and manual searches.

Results: Among 2,797 editors from 44 journals, 33% were women. Female representation varied across editorial levels: 26% at level I, 36% at level II, and 31% at level III. Gender balance disparities existed among journals. Female first authors accounted for 50%, and female last authors accounted for 36% of the 2,725 published articles. We found weak but significant correlations between the editors' gender and the gender of the first and last authors.

Conclusion: Gender representation among ID and HE journal editors displayed unevenness, but no overt vertical segregation was observed. A generational transition among authors may be underway. Our findings suggest that a generational transition may be occurring among authors.

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, the representation of women in the field of medicine has undergone dynamic changes in various countries.^{1,2} For instance, in the United States of America (USA), there has been a notable increase in the proportion of female physicians. In 2007, women accounted for 28% of active physicians and 45% of residents and fellows. Fast forward to 2021, these numbers increased to 37.1% and 47.3% for active physicians and residents/fellows, respectively.³ Similarly, the landscape in infectious diseases (ID) has also transformed.^{1,3} In 2007, the USA had one ID physician for every 46,952 individuals, with 33% of the 6,424 active ID physicians being women and a majority falling below the age of 55. Fourteen years later, the number of ID physicians increased to 9,913, with 1 physician for every 32,944 people, and the proportion of women rose to 43%.² However, the representation of younger individuals (under 55) in this field declined.

Given the growth of ID specialists, one might expect an increase in female leadership positions. However, studies conducted during different periods do not support this assumption. For instance, from 2008 to 2017, only 20% of the presidents of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) were women.⁴ Gender disparities were also observed in achieving the rank of full professor in academic ID in 2016,⁵ as well as in compensation in 2015,⁶ and an underrepresentation of female authors on IDSA guidelines' editorial boards for prominent ID publications from 2004 to 2018.⁷

The influence of editorial bodies in scientific publishing is pivotal, as journal editors act as gatekeepers to science, influencing research trends and significantly impacting the professional advancement of individuals, thus shaping academic and research programs.⁸ Yet, these editorial bodies have also been found to exhibit gender imbalances. A recent study across 41 international medical journal categories found that only 21% of editors-in-chief were women, with significant variability among medical specialties. In ID, this percentage was only 10% in 2019.⁹ Another recent study revealed that only 22% of editors-in-chief of ID and microbiology journals were women.¹⁰

With women comprising an increasing proportion of the ID and Hospital Epidemiology (HE) workforce, it becomes pertinent

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Hospital Infection And Epidemiology Journal

Christian G. Meyer



Hospital Infection And Epidemiology Journal:

Decoding **Hospital Infection And Epidemiology Journal**: Revealing the Captivating Potential of Verbal Expression

In an era characterized by interconnectedness and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, the captivating potential of verbal expression has emerged as a formidable force. Its capability to evoke sentiments, stimulate introspection, and incite profound transformations is genuinely awe-inspiring. Within the pages of "**Hospital Infection And Epidemiology Journal**," a mesmerizing literary creation penned with a celebrated wordsmith, readers attempt an enlightening odyssey, unraveling the intricate significance of language and its enduring impact on our lives. In this appraisal, we shall explore the book's central themes, evaluate its distinctive writing style, and gauge its pervasive influence on the hearts and minds of its readership.

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