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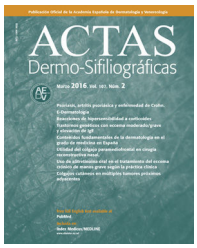

OPINION ARTICLE

Editorial Policies and Equality: The Importance of Publishing an Author's Given Name☆

Políticas de igualdad en el proceso editorial. Importancia de incluir el nombre de pila en las publicaciones científicas

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The editors of scientific journals are the gatekeepers who ensure compliance with ethical standards throughout the publishing process. These standards cover different aspects, such as ensuring the authenticity of the manuscripts, the correct application of scientific work, and the originality of the authorship. The ethical framework that guarantees the development of the scientific process is based on detailed guidelines that are applied to different facets of research, such as the CONSORT guidelines, which have led to improved notification of randomized trials, the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews, and the ARRIVE guidelines for research on animals.[1]

One of the aspects to be taken into account within this ethical framework is gender equality in scientific production. Most public bodies, scientific organizations, and research institutes include regulations on equality policies. Many scientific medical journals, such as *The Lancet* and *Nature* at the international level, or *Gaceta Sanitaria* in Spain,[2] have adopted policies to promote gender equality in the publishing process, in line with the recommendations of the European Association of Science Editors.

These policies include minimum recommendations on 2 aspects: how to take sex and gender into account in scientific publications, and actions to promote gender equality in journal management.

The first point, on recommendations regarding sex and gender in scientific publications, is based on the importance of considering sex and gender as determining factors of health and wellbeing, which must be properly considered among risk factors, biological mechanisms, clinical manifestations and disease treatment in any research process.[1] Sex refers to the biological characteristics of men and women, and gender is based on socially conditioned inequalities. Both terms are often used interchangeably and although they are conceptually different, they may be interrelated and one may affect the other.[3] The SAGER guidelines[1] were published to help authors to prepare their manuscripts; these guidelines provide indications on the equal incorporation of sex and gender in research and make it clear that integrating these aspects makes science more rigorous and ethical.[4,5] Their design makes it possible to include evaluation of the presence of men and women, and the gender perspective in all manuscripts, as an integral part of the publishing process.

The second point refers to the promotion of gender equality in journal management and has to do with the presence of women in the decision-making bodies of journals and in the authorship of scientific publications. In general, representation of women in decision-making bodies in science, such as the editorial boards of journals, is low if we consider the high percentage of women with higher academic qualifications.[2] A study of 60 journals carried out in 2011[6] found that women on editorial boards accounted for les than 20%, and only 16%

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of editors in chief were women. Similarly, a smaller percentage of women was found on the editorial boards of 131 Spanish journals, although the proportion showed an upward trend.[7]

The participation of women in the authorship of scientific publications reveals different data. According to a global bibliometric analysis,[8] a smaller proportion of women than men are authors (first authors and co-authors), and manuscripts signed by women attract fewer citations.[8] However, a potential improvement in the visibility of the careers of female researchers[9,10] and a trend toward a reduction in differences over the past decade were observed.[11]

Little data is available in Spain,[12] as most journals do not include the first names of their authors and the involvement of women in the authorship of scientific articles is therefore difficult to determine. Thus, when establishing basic recommendations regarding journal management, one of the first measures to consider to determine whether articles are signed by men or by women is to include the full name of the authors.

Raising the visibility of women in the area of science and innovation is one of the goals put forward at the recently created Observatory on Women, Science and Innovation for gender equality in the Spanish system of science, technology and innovation.[13]

Moreover, the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECTY)[14] recommends using the complete form of first names to distinguish between genders or potential homonyms. While databases may establish guidelines aimed at encouraging normalization of author names, their scope of action is restricted. Journals, however, are considered to be able to play an important role in normalizing names through their editorial policies and their instructions to authors.

Many bibliometric studies have been carried out in the field of dermatology to study scientific production in relation to authors, institutions, geographic areas, type of journal, topic field, and bibliographic references.[15–17] It would also be helpful to include an analysis of author sex in the bibliometric studies. A review of different scientific publications in dermatology worldwide shows that many of these publications include the full names of the authors, whereas others, such as Actas Dermo-Sifilográficas has still not adopted this policy, thus making this gender analysis more difficult to perform. It is not known whether gaps that may hinder advancement in dermatology exist in the productivity of women who take part in authoring scientific publications.[18]

There is a high percentage of women in medicine and specifically in dermatology,[19] and the number of female dermatologists in the Spanish Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (AEDV) has gradually increased.[20] Women are strongly represented on the editorial board and management team of the journal *Actas Dermo-Sifilográficas* and the same is probably true of scientific production; however, we cannot be sure of this, as it is currently impossible to determine the degree of participation of women in the publications because the full names of the authors are not shown.

Including the first names of authors in the articles of Actas Dermo-Sifilográficas would be an important step for measuring and analyzing the participation of women in its publications and would help to decide the equality policies to be applied.

The journal *Actas Dermo-Sifilográficas* is an important channel for communicating scientific advances in the field of dermatology in Spanish and, as such, should include equality policies throughout the publishing process. This would be a further step in the commitment to progress in equality between the sexes in research.

Including the first names of authors may highlight the real situation of the publication, allow for bibliometric analyses that include gender analysis, and may be another element in the journal's progress toward excellence.

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